MARCH, 1935

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THE COMMUNIST

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Report to the Central Committee Meeting of the C.P.U.S.A., January 15-18, 1935
EARL BROWDER

Our "C. E."
ROBERT MINOR

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ALBERT RADIER

The Anniversary of the Paris Commune and the Struggle Against Fascist Terror
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C. E. RUTHENBERG
July 9, 1882—March 2, 1927

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Report to the Central Committee Meeting of the C.P.U.S.A., January 15-18, 1935

By EARL BROWDER

FIRST of all on the developments of the international situation. It is one of the signs of the times that yesterday the newspapers reported the speech of Senator Nye, in which he declared that "it is safe to say we are closer to war today than we were thirty days before the World War". Senator Nye is not talking as a private individual, not only as Senator, but as the head of the munitions investigation which has led him very close to the question of the imminence of war. His utterance is not an isolated one. Where a year or two ago the Communists were the only ones to talk about the war danger, today everyone speaks of it much in the same terms as those used by Senator Nye.

Since the last meeting of our Central Committee there has been a series of outstanding events to underline this question. There was in the first line the assassination of our Comrade Kirov, one of the outstanding leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, one of the closest co-workers of Comrade Stalin. This assassination was without question part of a highly organized conspiracy of international ramifications, designed to answer the tremendous achievements of our Socialist fatherland in the construction of the new order by not only attempting to throw confusion into the ranks of the Russian workers, but at the same time to encourage and provoke the imperialist attack against the Soviet Union. It is a definite part of the drive towards war.

The events surrounding the Saar plebiscite, the results of which are just announced this morning, are by no means ended with the announcement of the poll. The Saar remains one of the points of greatest strain in the imperialist system around which forces of imperialist war are revolving. The break-up of the naval negotiations further emphasizes this situation and brings forward in the center of the war danger, especially in relation to the tasks of the American Party, the sharpening of the Japanese-American antagonisms, which play a decisive role on the whole process of the regrouping of the imperialist forces of the entire world. There is no doubt that but for the threat of revolutionary upheavals and the enormously growing defensive powers of the Soviet Union backing up the ag-

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gressive peace policy of the Soviet Union, that war would long ago have broken out.

The rising tide of revolutionary struggles—outstandingly the battles in Spain and the growing revolutionary crisis in Cuba, right at our own doorstep, strengthen the forces of the struggle against war, but at the same time bring it closer to the point when some event, more or less casual or accidental, may explode the powder barrel of imperialist antagonisms.

All of the work of our Party has to be conducted in the light of this world situation. It is not necessary for us to give again a detailed analysis of all of these problems, but it is necessary to remind ourselves of these as the foundation for all our treatment of the daily problems of our work.

Now I want to say just a few words about the developments of the economic situation since the last meeting of the Central Committee. During this short period, there have been ups and downs of the economic trends. In October and November the economic activity of the United States had reached the bottom of a new decline, which was approximately about the same level which had already been reached under Hoover in November 1932, two years before.

Now there is again a slight upturn. We cannot say definitely how far it will go, the exact moment at which the decline will again come, but we can establish the fact that all of the fluctuations, up and down, in the last year and a half have taken place within the limits below the high point of the inflation policy of the first months of the Roosevelt Administration and above the low levels of the Hoover Administration. That is, all of these ups and downs serve to emphasize that characterization given by Stalin a year ago when he pointed out that the crisis has entered a period of depression, but it is a depression of a special kind—a prolonged depression which gives no hope for a return to boom prosperity. Everything that is happening confirms this analysis.

It is necessary to say just one or two words about new features of the policy, as carried through by the Roosevelt Administration. Since our last meeting the Administration has definitely moved to the Right. It has definitely set itself to bridge the gap between itself and the policy of the Liberty League. The policy on unemployment and the so-called "security" program fully confirms this.

It hardly even has a demagogic value any more. The labor policy, the policy towards the American Federation of Labor unions has moved even further, more definitely away from the demagogic promises of Section 7A, more decisively towards the possibility of company unions, necessary to prevent the organization of real trade unions and against any unionism at all where that is possible.

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This first policy of the Roosevelt administration is particularly important for us to note because it serves to emphasize greatly the favorable opportunities for our work among the broadest masses, especially in the organization of the A. F. of L., because this development brings out before the masses in much sharper form than ever before the contradictions between the immediate interests of the masses and the policies of the leadership of the A. F. of L. Circumstances under which the bureaucracy carry out the policy today are much more difficult, and the maneuvering ground has been narrowed, and all possibilities of leading the masses and winning them to our class struggle policy in much broader numbers have been greatly increased.

Coincident with this whole development, which serves to emphasize the economic results of the year 1934 for the bourgeoisie, which has been one of increasing profits for the capitalists and a decline in the living standards for the masses, we have the concurrent development of fascist mass movements in their first stages. The concerted attack against the living standard of the masses is necessary more and more, supplementing the methods of demagogy with that of open fascist violence. Not that demagogy is passing out of the picture, but rather that it is incorporating within itself more and more the direct physical attacks against every manifestation of revolutionary mass organization and action.

The revelation of Smedley Butler throws an interesting light on all of these things which are going on underneath the surface, and by no means has revealed the most important facts. The rising of the figure of the half-fascist Huey Long as a major national political figure has also an important connection with this problem.

The beginnings of a national mass organization around the radio priest Father Coughlin are also a symptom of this development. And above all we must note the open fascist campaign of Hearst in the Hearst press which is already, in the case of Hearst's attack against all even liberal tendencies in universities and schools in the United States, taking on all the characteristic features of the first stages of Hitler's campaign in Germany.

We have already in documents, and in articles which have been made available for the whole Party, analyzed the main features of the upsurge of the working class, the toiling masses generally, which has developed during 1934, as the response to these attacks by the bourgeoisie. It is not necessary for us to take the time of this meeting to go over all of this ground again. We will note here these things as basic to our further discussion.

We must emphasize that as a result of all of these developments, profound changes have taken place in this country in the recent

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period. We have been adjusting ourselves to these changes step by step during the course of the year. We have been modifying and hammering out our policy, trying at every step of the development to keep our feet firmly upon the ground, not going off into any speculations, testing the ground as we go along, and making the further steps in the developments of our policy, the correctness of which has been proven not only to the Central Committee leadership of our Party, but to the Party membership as a whole and to the broad masses surrounding our Party, and the correctness of the decision after that development. We can say that the most successful feature of the work of the Central Committee of our Party in this past year has been purecisely this feature: that we have carried the Party and the workers who are with us almost 100 per cent without the slightest doubt being left in their minds as to the correctness of these policies in connection with every change and every shift of emphasis that we have made.

I will speak first about the new development in our trade union policy. This is basic to all of our work. We have made important changes in our trade union tactics in the course of 1934. Some of these we discussed at the Eighth Convention of the Party. We developed this further in the two following meetings of the Central Committee. The general direction of these changes has been clear to the Party from the beginning. It consisted of a shift of emphasis away from the independent organization to the work within the larger mass organization, in the American Federation of Labor. It is clear, the force that predetermined this shift were the influx of many hundreds of thousands of new workers from the basic industries, including large numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled, including mass production plants as well as basic industries, into the A. F. of L. unions and the growing radicalization of the old membership in the reformist unions.

These factors opened up new and greater possibilities of mass work within the larger reformist unions, opened up a field which had not existed for several years. Now as a result of our concrete developments in carrying through this shift of policy we are able to summarize the results of our last years' work now at this meeting of the Central Committee and to give a general clarification of the whole question in much more precise and comprehensive terms than we were before. The line is clear. The problems have been worked out in principle, we have proven in action among the masses the correctness of the policy which we have developed. We are now able to say very clearly and definitely that the main task of the Party in the sphere of trade union work must be the work in the A. F. of L., so as to energetically and tirelessly mobilize the masses

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of their members in the trade unions as a whole for the defense of the every day interests, the development of the policy of class struggle in the mass unions of the A. F. of L., fighting on the basis of trade union democracy, for the independent leadership of these struggles in spite of the sabotage and treachery of the reformist bureaucrats.

We have established unquestionably an enormous increase in strength which we are getting from taking the initiative boldly, aggressively for the struggle of the unity of the trade unions, the struggle for one united trade union movement, for their industrial structure, for the organization of the unorganized, for amalgamation of the craft unions along industrial lines; the struggle for trade union democracy within these unions, within the general framework of the A. F. of L. We have established that in this development a very serious and important role is played by the revolutionary unions. I don't think it is necessary for me at this meeting again to go over the ground of establishing the historical justification of the revolutionary independent unions. They proved themselves in the class struggle as necessary instruments without which we could never have had the present situation of great advance within the A. F. of L. And also at this moment, the independent revolutionary unions have a great role to play in the fight for the general unification of the trade union movement and for the establishment of class struggle policies within the A. F. of L.

The revolutionary unions which have taken the initiative in leading this struggle have strengthened themselves and not weakened themselves, and where there has been the merger with the A. F. of L. unions, it has not been at the cost of weakening the revolutionary movement, but greatly broadening and deepening the mass roots of the revolutionary trade union movement.

An outstanding example of this has been the Paterson silk workers and dyers, which gives an answer that should convince the most skeptical of our comrades, that should convince everybody except the incurable egomaniacs, and renegades like Zack. We have established the fact that while practically we will for a long time be faced with the problems of the necessity of independent unions in one field or another, that we cannot have utopian hopes of quickly securing the immediate unification in the trade union movement within the A. F. of L., yet in principle even the maintenance and strengthening of these independent unions, which must continue independent, are best served by the approach to the questions that in principle we are for the complete unification; that the independent existence of smaller trade unions is a temporary thing and not in any sense a question of principle with us. We have proven that this approach does not

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weaken the work in the independent unions. Those who have tried to come forward against these changes, against this trade union line, who have put themselves up as the champions of the policy who want to mechanically liquidate them, have been fully answered by the fact that these independent unions, which are growing and strengthening themselves, are precisely those which are closest to the Communist Party. And we have proven in life that the policy of the C.P. is the best protection of the interests of those workers and the best defense against any liquidation tendencies. We have learned in the carrying through of these changes that the change that we are in the process of making, must be much more profound and deep-going. So far this change has not been completely carried through. So far it has not yet sufficiently penetrated and affected and changed the habits and methods of our work of our comrades down below. This is reflected especially in the question of our daily response to the daily questions of our relations with the A. F. of L. unions.

At this meeting it is necessary for us to see that we must from top to bottom in our movement change the tone with which we approach and deal with A. F. of L. unions. We must not have the tone of an approach toward enemy organizations. While criticizing and exposing more concretely, more effectively, the treacherous leadership of the officialdom, we must make it in a manner that is really convincing to the broadest rank and file, and with the tone which gives not one single worker the excuse for believing that in us he finds an obstacle towards the building and strengthening of his union—what he regards as his union. We must have the approach not of fighting against the functionaries in the trade union movement, but of drawing in all of the honest functionaries,—and there are thousands of them down below—and winning them for our movement, and making these lower activists of the A. F. of L. real forces for the revolutionary trade union movement.

And we must establish that we are not an irresponsible criticizing opposition within the union, but that we are the most active and most responsible section of the union; ready ourselves to take the full responsibilty for the leadership and the administration of the union as a whole and responsible to the whole mass of the membership. And in this connection we must speak very concretely against old habits of thought and old methods of work in the reformist unions which have crystallized around the conception of opposition and minority movements. Around these two terms there have crystallized whole sectarian habits of thought where we have withdrawn ourselves from the life of the union, with no expectations and hopes of ever becoming the leadership and administration, but become a small

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group of opposition on principle, whom the membership always expects to be against everything and never doing responsible work in the unions for the solution of the problems.

The same thing applies to the conception of minority movements, of a permanent minority. We come in the unions not to be the minority, but to win the majority in the shortest possible time, to break down the whole ideology of our forms and habits which we have.

This means that while we must give the struggle an organized form, that this must not be a blue-print uniformly and mechanically applied everywhere, but that the organized form must grow out of the intimate life of this union so that all the members will understand that this is not an outside body, but even those who are against us must see that it is something natural and legitimate that grows out of this union, the members of the union.

These are the main features that we establish in our Resolution, before you, on the trade union question. We take a further step in this Resolution. But a step which is logical and inevitable, summarizing and rounding-out all of the steps we have been taking in the past year. With this Resolution, I think, we can say that the evaluation of our trade union policy to meet the present situation has now been completed, that our problem from this becomes the finding of the concrete roads through which we can establish everywhere and in every industry such powerful foundations by our movement as have already in a few short months been developed in the few places in textile, some beginnings in steel, in mining, etc.

Now a few words about some of the special problems of the united front. The trade union question is, of course, basic to the whole problem of the united front. The signs of the development of the united front moves and movements among the workers are above all demonstrated in the trade unions. Precisely in this connection we have spoken about the various industries and such phenomena as the rebuff given to Green's circular for the expulsion of the Communists.

In the United States more than in most of the leading capitalist countries, the problem of the united front is broader than winning the workers in and around the Socialist Party. The problem of the united front is, first of all, the problem of the trade unions, of broad circles of non-party workers or followers of the old parties, and of the non-proletarian strata. However, we must not on this account underestimate the importance of the question of our relation to the Socialist Party workers. The Socialist Party has in spite of its weak and demoralized condition at the present time, enormous potentialities for harm for the working class movement,

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which can only be countered and overcome by us with the correct united front approach and the winning of the followers of the Socialist Party for united front actions. The central question which we have not yet sufficiently solved in practice in the development of all phases of our united front activity is the carrying out throughout various united front work of a very broad mass agitation and propaganda about the role of our Party. This problem we used to express in the caution against hiding the face of our Party. But that old phrase has perhaps become too much of just a label which is mechanically applied to certain situations and mechanically answered. Let us restate this problem. Let us place this question from the point of view of the tasks of our Party to make use of the united front activity to educate the broadest masses as to what our Party is, what our program is, what our practical program is, to bring this through our united front activity, not merely in touch with our membership, but giving them knowledge of our Party as the organized driving force within the united front.

We have been in the past year trying to teach the Party by example how this can be done and how there is no contradiction between this talk of educating the masses on the role of our Party, with the simultaneous task of building the united front on the broadest possible basis. Any attempt to broaden out the united front, by putting into the background this task of teaching the masses about our Party, is a fatal opportunist error, which not only places our Party in the background and hides it from the masses, but defeats and destroys our efforts to broaden and build the united front of struggle for important and immediate issues.

I think that in the recent Washington Congress on Unemployment Insurance, we gave an example of how the sharp bringing forward of the Party and its role and its whole revolutionary program not only doesn't endanger the broadest united front, but serves to cement it, to crystallize it together as a conscious, organized movement which cannot be shattered and dispersed by any casual event of the day.

We must make the whole Party conscious of the problem, and on the basis of the best examples of our Party work, carry this method of work down into every neighborhood, down into every trade union and into every workers' organization. We must make a determined offort now to liquidate the still-strong sectarian tendencies in the daily work of our Party.

We have talked a great deal about the struggle against sectarianism; we have been struggling against sectarianism quite consciously in an organized way for several years. But now we must bring this struggle against sectarianism and methods and habits of sectarianism

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to a new stage, and not just a question of increasing the amount of our talk against sectarianism.

Now it is the question of bringing the whole Party actively into mass work and liquidating through practical experience every old habit, and every old idea that stands as an obsacle between us and the masses. That means, of course, getting the whole Party active in carrying through these trade union tasks, these tasks of the united front, getting every Party unit, every Party committee, every Party member daily facing and solving concrete problems of contact with broad masses of workers; to throw the whole life and attention of the Party from the inward orientation, to the outward, so that their whole life is dominated by the problems of the masses around them and not by their own inner difficulties and discussions.

We have in the past year made a whole series of approaches to top leadership, especially of the Socialist Party, in the development of our united front activities. We will have to make such approaches in the future. At this moment, however, it is necessary to emphasize this point—that whatever advances the united front is able to make through these approaches from the top, in the final analysis, it always depends upon our work down below among the membership of the Socialist Party and the American Federation of Labor Unions.

The united front from below—this remains basic to everything that we are doing in this field. It is impossible to think that we could have built up the various organized phases of our united front activities even to the inclusion of these leading strata which we have drawn in, except upon the basis that we had below a growing mass pressure upon these leaders, so that they are not moving independently; they are being carried along in mass streams of thought and activity of their own membership and of the surrounding population. This is the thing that changes minds of leading elements, activists, in the various organizations.

Our arguments may help to change their minds. But much more potent to change their minds than our arguments is the pressure of the masses. Our arguments, the development of the explanation of our position on every question—this is basic for the gaining of the masses down below. But for the gaining of the leading cadres and top leadership basic is not our arguments to them, but the fact that the masses have taken our arguments and bring pressure against them. That is why we will continue on appropriate occasions the approaches from above. But here again we emphasize that all united front activity is basically the building of the united front from below.

We must emphasize this right now with relation to the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party is split up into many groupings. Three

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definite trends can be discerned among all these groupings—a real Leftward development of a large proportion of the membership and following of the S.P.; a very hard-boiled crystalized Right-Wing Old Guard; and then a section of the leadership which tries to play the Centrist role of conciliation between these two basic tendencies and the controlling of the Left tendencies by giving certain concessions in words and phrases with practical capitulation to the Right Wing.

We must develop our struggle for the united front among the Socialists by a correct attitude towards the well-developed, well-concretized raising of issues and development of struggles among the Socialists, which will make clear to them, through their own experience, the role of these various currents and groupings in their leadership. That means that we must direct a heavy, sustained fire against the Old Guard, the Right Wing; and that we must develop a very penetrating criticism of the Centrist tendency on the basis of showing to the masses of the membership how in practice Thomas and the whole Centrist group carries through, in a masked form, the basic policies of the Old Guard. And towards the Left, the real Leftward-moving membership and large numbers of their leading activists, we must develop the most comradely approach, not conciliating for one second to their remaining opportunist illusions or to their confusion, conducting the most painstaking and patient explanatory work among them to prove to them the essentially reformist character of even their Revolutionary Policy Committee, not to speak of the official Declaration of Principles, by establishing as our basic approach to the whole rank and file to these revolutionary groups or Left group, including their activists, the atmosphere of expectation of winning them, of carrying them into the united front struggle, and eventually winning them to the Communist Party.

In the course of this, we will, by the experiences of these Left groups of the Socialist Party, bring forward quite naturally the differentiation among their leading elements between those who are really Left, in the sense of really wanting to go with the masses in their present trend and those who are "Left" (in quotation marks) not to further develop this movement, but to divert it, check it, and hold it within the old boundaries and bring it back under the control of the old leadership.

Our Resolution points out that the political changes that have taken place in 1934 among the masses demand that we review our whole attitude towards the question of the Labor Party. One feature of our approach to this question has remained constant throughout the whole period since 1928. The correct basic approach

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to the question which we have never changed was formulated by the Sixth World Congress in 1928. At that time we were faced with a situation in which practically there was no mass movement for a Labor Party. We had to determine how we should readjust ourselves towards this question when there was no mass movement for it.

The question was greatly discussed in the Commissions of the Sixth World Congress, and finally the decision which was written into the thesis of the Congress was that proposed by Stalin. I will read it to you—it is brief, only a few lines—but it stands as an essentially correct approach for this whole period, when we opposed practical proposals for a Labor Party, as well as now when we decide again to revive the question.

> "On the question of the organizing of the Labor Party, the Congress resolves that the Party concentrate its attention on the work in the trade unions, on organizing the unorganized, etc., and in this way lay the basis for the practical realization of the slogan of a broad Labor Party organized from below."

In 1929, a year after the Sixth World Congress, in discussing what this means practically in our concrete work in the United States, we came to the conclusion that this correct orientation required that we should come out against all of the current proposals then being made for the organization of a Labor Party. We declared that any practical steps towards organizing a Labor Party in those conditions could only result in the building of a new appendage of the old parties. The only ones who were practically for a Labor Party would have been the Communists, the narrow movement of the Socialist Party and a few scattered bureaucrats. True, the process of radicalization of the masses under the impact of the crisis was already beginning then, but this radicalization of the masses was not taking such forms as to give promise of any immediate mass Labor Party emerging. The best proof that our judgment was correct at that time is the fact that in the five years that have intervened, nobody has been able to do anything practical with the idea of a Labor Party.

SITUATION IS CHANGING

It is clear now when we look back over these years that if we had been playing around with the slogan of a Labor Party in the absence of a mass movement it would not have advanced us one step. We would not have developed a Labor Party and we would have taken attention away from the basic tasks of the movement directly connected with what was going on among the masses. The question which we have to answer now is whether in 1934 this situation is

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changing in such a way as to require us to revise our practical attitude towards this question. We say, when we look over the situation of the past year, definitely: Yes, the situation is changing. There has begun in this year the clearly discernable beginnings of a mass disintegration of the old Party system, the beginnings of the breakup of the old parties, the distinct possbility appears now that a new mass party may come forth out of this distintegration of the old parties, the Democratic and the Republican parties. This is something new in the political life of our Party which we have not seen since 1923-24 when in the period following the post-war crisis, a similar break-away movement developed which was finally corralled into the LaFollette movement.

Under present conditions in 1934 what can we say about the possible character and for which such a mass break-away from the old parties will take? What are the possible variations which such a new mass party will take? It is clear that there is a large number of possible forms in which this movement might emerge. In our resolution we point out four possible variations, four possible types which this movement could take.

WHAT KIND OF LABOR PARTY?

First of all it may become a popular, populist or progressive party of the type of the LaFollette party in Wisconsin, of the Sinclair movement, of the Olson, Long movements, crystallized as a new mass party on a national scale. Or secondly, it might be a party similar in composition and character to that, but which would put forward a name of Farmer Labor Party, or Labor Party even, differing only in its name and in the degree it developed the demagogy which would come with such a name. The third possible variation might be more concretely a Labor Party with a predominant trade union base, with a program concerning immediate demands, possibly with a vague demagogy about the cooperative commonwealth such as even Olson carries on in Minnesota, but dominated by a section of the trade union bureaucracy organized from above, with the assistance of the Socialist Party and the excluding the Communist and the militant elements. The fourth possibility is that this mass break away might crystallize in the form of a Labor Party built from below, as pointed out by the Sixth World Congress resolution, on predominantly a trade union base including also all mass organizations of the workers, but in conflict with the bureaucracy or with the larger part of it, putting forward a program of demands closely connected with the mass struggles, strikes, unemployment, and so on, with the leading role being played by the militant elements including the Communists.

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Of course you must not understand these four types we list as rigid, fixed things. They can develop in all possible varieties with even parallel developments of different types and at various stages the movement might reflect one type and then another. But these four types that we give as possible variations serve to illustrate the various relation of forces of the struggle between the revolutionary trends and the reformist trends and how they would result in given circumstances in the different types of parties, with a different type of leadership and program and towards which our attitude would have to be different. We cannot take one and the same attitude towards all the various forms and crystallizations which the break away from the old capitalist parties may take on. Our attitude must be varied according to the form which it does take. Especially now in this early stage of the development our attitude has to be directed towards helping to determine in advance what kind of form this movement will take so that we become an active factor in determining what will be the result.

It is clear that we cannot be passive towards this mass break away from the old parties. We must have a positive atttiude towards it. We must change our negative position towards the Labor Party question which was determined by the absence of a practical mass movement which made it a practical problem. Now there is a mass movement and it is a question of our Party's participation among these masses and influencing their course.

In our resolution we say that the Party must declare its support for the movement for a Labor Party and fight within this general mass break away from the old parties to determine that the party form and character which are taken by the movement shall correspond to this fourth possible variation we have listed and not to any of the others, that it shall be a Labor Party organized from below, reflecting in the closest possible way the mass struggles and bringing forward the militant elements as an integral part of the leadership of such a party.

Our resolution points out very sharply that within this general movement we must carry on a systematic struggle against all attempts to direct it into the channels of the progressive party or a similar party which only masks itself as Farmer Labor or Labor Party, and so on. In order to accomplish this, of course, in order to influence this movement at all, we have to be in it and have positive proposals to make. We cannot participate in it effectively if we stand merely as inactive critics of it. Neither can we expect that with such a mass break away of millions, in which millions will be shifting from old political allegiances overnight, that these millions will come directly to the Communist Party. We have nothing in our political experi-

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ences which would lead us to expect that we, still a small party, can overnight bring these masses to Communism.

We know that before they come to us they will have to go through a process of struggle and education out of their own experiences. We know that this process will be much faster and more complete if at all stages of their development these masses see the Communists fighting shoulder to shoulder with them, working together with them in the development of the broadest phases of their mass struggle. That is what predetermines our decision that it is necessary to declare positively in favor of the support for and participation in a Labor Party of that fourth type which we have described.

In our participation in this broad mass movement, of course, our central task is to bring the clear differentiation into two distinct camps, those who want on one hand to develop this mass movement along the moderate, liberal, social reformist channels and on the other hand those who want to develop the struggle of the masses for their immediate interests wihtout regard to or in direct opposition to the interests of private property and profits.

In the struggle for this differentiation within this movement, we will have two dangers which we must avoid, two possible deviations on our part. On the one hand we will have the danger of sectarian narrowness on our part which would only play into the hands of the reformists. This means, first of all, that the basis for gathering together of the workers into such a Labor Party must be the immediate demands with the broadest mass appeal. We must not allow the reformist leaders to split the masses with speculations on these differences among the masses between those who accept the class struggle clear up to and including the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolutionary section, those that follow the Communist Party, and on the other hand that larger section of the masses which accepts the class struggle for the immediate issues, but is not yet prepared to go the whole way up to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

MUST AVOID SECTARIAN DANGER

The sectarian danger, the danger of limiting down this movement to only the revolutionists and their sympathizers must be at all costs avoided. At the same time the open Right danger will be the greater danger if we reach the stage of crystallization on a national scale of a mass Labor Party, the danger of opportunistic capitulation, surrender to the reformist trends, practices and habits which will be a very strong factor at work within such a mass Labor Party.

It is clear, as our resolution points out, that in this situation the

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simple slogan for a Labor Party under which we operated years ago would express such conflicting tendencies that it is not sufficient to be the effective banner for our struggle. Yes, we are for a Labor Party, but we are for a particular kind of Labor Party. We are for a Labor Party of the nature that we specified in the resolution as the fourth possible type. We are against this movement being organized under the leadership of the LaFollettes, with the program of the Progressive Party. We are against all of these various compromises between the idea of a mass Labor Party and such a progressive bourgeois party. We Communists enter the movement for the Labor Party only with the purpose of helping the masses to break away from the bourgeois camp, break away from social reformists and find the path to the revolutionary class struggle.

This means also that all premature organizational moves must be very carefully avoided. In this early stage of the movement it is especially our enemies within this movement that will press most energetically for quick reorganizational crystallization of the new party, before the masses find out what it is all about and while they will still by habit put their old leaders in the positions of responsibility and power.

OUR TASKS

On the other hand we must be speeding up the political differentiation within this movement so that when we come to the stage of organization the masses will already have a basis for political choice between class collaboration and the class struggle. We must already have a broad section of this movement crystallized on issues of the class struggle so that a class struggle leadership will be developed in the organizational crystallization of such a party. The Communist Party therefore must not now take the initiative in the organization of a Labor Party on a national scale. In the various states, however, the situation will be of many sorts, according to the various stages of the development of the movement. It will be necessary to study the situation in each place, study the relation of forces, the tempo of development and give a concrete answer in each state and even in each city. Very often we will find in certain cities it will be much further developed than the state as a whole. In those states and cities where the conditions have matured for the formation of a mass Labor Party we must be prepared to ourselves initiate the organizational steps either directly or through people and organizations close to us.

While we have warned against premature organizational moves, at the same time we must emphasize this does not mean slowness of

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initiative on our part or lack of initiative. The development in this movement does not necessarily take its first steps with organizational measures. We have immediately taken political initiative on this question directly from the Political Bureau with the speech which I made, on the decision of the Political Bureau, in Washington at the Unemployment Congress. In this sense we want the greatest initiative displayed. Only when the masses see the Communists as the political initiators of those steps which they themselves will conclude are necessary for their own life's interests, only then will we begin to win them for our whole program.

A question has been raised as to whether these changes in our policy that we propose do not necessarily require that we shall self-critically declare that we were mistaken in our previous attitude towards the Labor Party. Already some—of course, the Lovestoneites—are proclaiming that the C.P. has finally come around to their point of view, but of course the C.P. will never admit that it made a mistake. They say that of course it is clear that the Party was absolutely wrong in its stand with regard to the Labor Party, and that now we are forced to admit it by changing and coming around to their opinion. Even some of our Party members have said: Of course we are glad to hear about this new policy, and we are for it 100 per cent, but why don't you say—we recognize our mistake.

We have already given the basic political answer to this question, but it is necessary to go into one or two more angles of this question. We must very clearly answer the question for ourselves—not merely to answer the renegades. Was our position on the Labor Party question at all times and in all particulars correct during this period? On the whole the answer I have already given is the correct one—that our Party correctly refused to play around with an abstract slogan when there was no practical mass movement to embody it. I think, however, that we must not take the position that all the details of everything we said about the Labor Party question during the discussion of this question is gospel which must be defended today. I think that some things were written and said which were not correct, which were a deviation from and a distortion of the line of the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, some things which were partially correct, and some incorrect. For example, we printed during that period an article by Mr. Zack (now the lying open Trotskyist counter-revolutionist) on the Labor Party which contained a whole series of fundamental errors, and we allowed Zack's article to be printed without criticism. Also, in some of our official documents, we made some arguments which were incorrect. There were other statements made and not effectively

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criticized in the Party. There were such incidental mistakes in the course of the development of our attitude toward the Labor Party question, which we have no reason to hide. We have nothing to gain from covering up the mistakes that have been made, and which in the light of the changed situation, require of us to review very critically our past; we can very well afford to make these corrections.

In making these corrections, however, it is the opinion of the PolBuro that we must be very much alert to combat and to liquidate tendencies which reflect the attitude of the Lovestoneites, who will see in this new move an opportunity to revert to the opportunism of the Lovestone group. As for the Lovestoneite leaders, it is true that since their "fundamental" change in becoming renegades they have held firm to their course.

Next: There is a whole series of questions as to how to apply this line in practice. We have not tried to work these out in the resolution before you; but this must occupy the center of our discussion, particularly in each district, the comrades should not confine themselves to saying that they agree with the line presented, which I think almost everybody already does—from that moment they should concentrate their contribution to this discussion upon the concrete question as to how in each city, in each district, this line can best be applied—to most effectively, most quickly give us a mass movement, a political crystallization around this question of the Labor Party.

Next: There is a special feature of this problem which we have not worked out in the resolution, which will require special examination and a special document as soon as we can be certain that we have gotten a clear line of development—that is, the alignment of the Negro masses to this possible Labor Party. There is no question but that with the proper development of our work in the Negro mass organizations—churches, clubs, lodges—that we can further our Negro work, in developing the issues of Scottsboro, Herndon, the movement for the Negro rights' bill—and if we properly connect this up, we have the possibility of developing a mass swing of the Negro population into the new Labor Party. This must still be worked out and answered.

Then, lastly, we must answer the question that has been raised as to whether the PolBuro has correctly gone about in placing this question of the Labor Party before the Party and the whole working class. We received in the National Office a letter from a comrade which raised this question in which he states that while he agreed with the policy he believed that the PolBuro had gone about developing it in the wrong way—that before any public announcement of any change in policy was made—that it was necessary to

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have a Party discussion and a Party decision after the discussion—that the whole membership of the Party had a right to say *yes* or *no* before the PolBuro had the right to make a public announcement on this question. This comrade did not state this in so many words, but this was the nature of the criticism raised, and this is a question that demands an answer.

We think that the development of our trade union policy, and also the question of a Labor Party serve us as an example of the real function of proletarian democracy within our Party. I have already taken occasion to emphasize how in the development of our trade union policy we have been so careful to move not as a leadership closeted away from the movement and membership of our Party and the masses generally, but took every step to insure the most active collaboration of the broadest circles of workers, to convince them and ourselves of the correctness of our course in the light of our joint experiences. This is real working class democracy.

We also think that our Communist Party has long passed the stage when inner Party democracy takes the form which it used to have for so many years, that when a new political problem arises the Political Bureau discusses it, divides it into two groups, issues two theses and goes before the Party to fight it out as to which group in the Political Bureau is correct. That was the old type of Party "democracy". I don't think our Party needs that kind of democracy. I don't think that our Party would have had its level raised if we had had a division within the Party leadership and then brought it before the units for vote.

Further, our opinion is that especially since the Eighth Convention of our Party, we have stabilized our Party to such an extent that the established leadership of the Party has an authority which is not merely formal, but that the Central Committee has before the whole Party an authority which is based upon a confidence which the Party members and broad non-Party sympathizers have—a confidence in the leadership of the Party which is based upon experience, a confidence which has been continually renewed and strengthened by the further use of this authority which our Central Committee has given examples of in the past year. The authority of our Party leadership is not something mechanical and arbitrary, it is an authority which we are able to increase continually because we use it correctly, because we never make a decision or take a step in which we fail to convince the Party and the working masses around us that it is a correct decision and a correct step.

Such is the relationship between our leadership and Party members, between our Party as a whole and non-Party masses surrounding us.

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Now I just want to give a few words to a series of concrete questions that will occupy our attention especially in some of the later phases of our discussion here. I have already indicated, in discussing the Labor Party about a certain necessary turn in our Negro work. I think that we must very strongly put forward the idea throughout the Party that to make a real turn in our work among the Negro masses we must shift the scene of our attention to the existing mass organizations among the Negroes, no matter what—churches, fraternal organizations, neighborhood clubs, lodges, anything where the Negro masses are, that is where the center of our work is. We have, of course, said this for a long time that the basic concept of the building of the L.S.N.R. is, first of all, in the federation of existing mass organizations, individual membership groups and branches. But that was too much yet on paper. And in practice we always went out and did nothing except build up merely membership groups and even separating them from the mass organizations to which they formerly belonged.

I think a few words in the same sense are necessary about our agrarian work, especially work among the farmers where they are in their mass organizations. To a certain extent it applies to special work among the women. It is necessary to point out that while we have made certain advances in our special women's work, that as yet the Party as a whole is not conscious of this problem. I do not know of a single district in the Party that gives attention to work among the women. If I am wrong—if there is an exception then it is not even necessary to speak up about it. As a rule Party districts are paying no attention to it.

We have made a little more of a turn in bringing the Party into the solution of the problems of the youth. To the extent that we have changed the life of the Party, to this extent this turn dates back to the Eighth Convention when we placed it on the Agenda. Since then we dramatized it by some reports in the Central Committee meeting in July. But still we cannot say that this situation is satisfactory. Not that our youth movement is in the same isolated, sectarian situation that it was two years ago. No. The Y.C.L. has made a very promising step forward from being a small sectarian isolated sect. It has become the center of a great united front youth movement in which unquestionably our Y.C.L. plays the central political role. This is a tremendous advance. But how much more it could be if the Party in each district was taking this question seriously and giving leadership and a little help to the Y.C.L.

In those places where the Y.C.L. is still lagging behind, the responsibility rests precisely on the District Committee of the Party.

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We must emphasize in this meeting of the Central Committee this responsibility of the districts.

Just a word about the development of our cadres. There is certain improvement in this, in the last months, in the life of the Party. But as yet this is not placed upon a satisfactory basis, an organized part of the Party's work. There is a distinct improvement in the development and administration of the schools, in the curriculum and teaching staffs, although here the situation is far from satisfactory. Not sufficient direct leadership and participation of the most politically developed comrades in the school work. But it is not only in schools and in the development of the cadre commissions in the districts which are of most vital importance, but both that we must establish the practice in our Party that every leading Party member undertakes the task of the direct personal guidance and political patronage for the development of new cadres from below. Every one of our leading comrades must have at least two comrades attached to him whom he personally undertakes to supervise in political education. Is that too much to ask? There are a hundred other claims, but without this everything else will fail.

This also means more systematic distribution of the literature of our Party and especially the theoretical literature. Not only distribution but more systematic utilization. The whole thing is bound up together.

Now just a word or two about the *Daily Worker*. We have made innumerable decisions that we were seriously going to increase the circulation of the *Daily Worker*. But we don't carry them out. Since the last meeting of the Central Committee when we spoke about this very seriously, improvement of the *Daily Worker* circulation has not gone forward at a satisfactory pace. It is clear that long discussion about such a problem as this is fruitless. It simply means that the Party, leading committees, leading individuals, in spite of all decisions that we have taken, have proceeded to ignore the question. Is it possible that we would have this condition in circulation if any considerable number of our leading forces paid any attention to the problem of circulation? Maybe somebody will bring the argument that the contents of the *Daily Worker* are not satisfactory. It is true that the contents are not satisfactory; we must criticize and improve very decisively the *Daily Worker* although it has been improved. But we must say that all talk about the contents has no relation to the circulation problem. Not now. Maybe it will have in a few months from now, if we will get the *Daily Worker* circulation up to 100,000. From that time on we will argue as to whether further extension of the circulation requires further improvement of the contents. But at the present time we can say that

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without any regard to the contents, except that it is our paper, there is absolutely no excuse for it not having 100,000 today. There is no explanation except that we have not taken it up seriously at all.

The PolBuro has established a special commission to deal with this question, composed of myself, Comrade Krumbein and Comrade Wishnak, the manager of the *Daily Worker*. We are already carrying through measures in New York to make a turn in this question of circulation. But we want to make the same turn in every district of the Party. When the proposals reach your district, we want you not to merely file it, but take it up with the same seriousness that we take it in the center.

The question of recruiting. Here we will have a special examination under a special order of business and a very interesting report that will be given to you. We have recruiting going on, but it is still unsatisfactory. We do not keep the members that we recruit sufficiently and the recruiting power of the Party is not equally developed in all districts. Some districts recruit twice as many per member as other districts. Why is that? We must say that one of the ways in which we will strengthen the whole recruiting power of our Party is precisely this comparison of district to district. Concentrate on those districts which show the lowest recruiting power and find out why. Why Chicago, for example, recruits in 3 months 18 per cent of the old membership, whereas another district or center immediately adjoining Chicago recruits up to as high as 32 per cent. This problem of the recruiting power and activity of our Party is the very essence of the Party growth and development, and until we solve this and the question of reducing the Party fluctuation down to reasonable limits, we will not have sound ground under our feet.

Finally, let us again emphasize what we have made the main note of the last Party Convention, of what we have a tendency to forget, the making of decisions is only the first step to the solution of a problem. If we make a decision we have to organize the execution of that decision, control its execution, control its carrying out, and unless we do that, it is better not to make the decision in the first place, because a decision which is not carried through has a demoralizing effect in the life of the Party. It disorganizes, discourages, demoralizes the whole Party membership. We see continuously decisions being made and not being carried out. We have got to establish the most strict attitude throughout the Party to the question of decisions—and not so ready to accept decisions. It appalls me sometimes when I sit in on committee meetings to see the light-hearted way they make the most far-reaching decisions. Why do they make so many excellent decisions on paper? Because they

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have no intention of carrying them out; because they are interested only in expressing their excellent intentions. There is such a light-hearted approach to the question of whether a decision is to be carried out or not. These are remnants from a non-Bolshevik past. This is the enemy of Bolshevism, the enemy of the Bolshevization of our Party, and we must guard ourselves and make a rule against it.

We must demand that every decision be carried out, and if it is not, a formal explanation why, and a registration of our failure. Only if we approach our problems with this strict Bolshevik standard can we seriously expect to meet the tremendous burdens and difficulties that are going to fall upon us. It is true that we are expanding and growing, and strengthening ourselves. This not only multiplies our problems, but it requires a higher degree of organization and responsibility.

Unless we improve the quality of our leadership, the quality of our daily work, and the quality of our execution—the more we get among these moving masses, the more certainly we are going to be lost among them, broken up and distintegrated, unless we concentrate all attention on this supreme instrument without which the whole movement cannot go forward but a single step.

This is our Communist Party. The building of the C.P. is the building of responsible leading cadres. The committees and organs of our Party should never make decisions except that they carry them out in life; every line we write into our minutes has an immediate repercusion among the masses, and we can control and direct events among the masses, get these masses towards revolutionary struggle, towards the transformation of society, because we are able to control and guide our own inner-Party life, control the execution of our own decisions.

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Our "C. E."

IN MEMORY OF C. E. RUTHENBERG —JULY 9, 1882--MARCH 2, 1927

By ROBERT MINOR

IN March of each year we honor the memory of Charles Emil Ruthenberg, son of a Cleveland longshoreman and founder of the Communist Party of the United States of America. (He was known to all of us, around the world, as "C.E.")

Ruthenberg did not come to the leadership of the Communist Party through accident, nor did some chance combination of circumstances throw him suddenly into the position he occupied for nearly eight years at the head of the American revolutionary party. The first thing to note about Ruthenberg is that his life was unusually *consistent;* that almost all of his adult existence constituted a continuous course, without turning aside or hesitating in the one compelling motive of his life—the fight for the triumph of the working class, for Socialism, for Communism. And by the same token his life was an unbroken development toward the highest characteristics of Bolshevik leadership.

"C.E." was twenty-six years old when he joined the Socialist Party, in January, 1909. And that he joined it with his whole heart and soul is indicated by the fact that within three months he had taken official responsibility in an unpaid position in the local organization in Cleveland. It is well to recall, now, to the younger generation of the Socialist Party no less than to the younger Communists, the role of Ruthenberg in the Socialist Party. Counted in terms of real influence, it is impossible to escape the fact that the young Ruthenberg became, after the veteran Debs himself, the most significant of all leaders of the Socialist Party, during the decisive years of the struggle against the war and the biggest growth of the Socialist Party. From the time the young Ruthenberg was elected to the office of Recording Secretary of the City Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Cleveland in 1909, throughout the stormy ten years up to September 1, 1919, he exercised an increasingly revolutionary role in the Socialist Party.

It is a key to the understanding of his character if we remember that he was, during the entire time, entrusted not only with posts within the party's Ohio organization, but was at the same time its mass leader. In 1910, he was the party's candidate for State

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Treasurer, in 1911 for Mayor of Cleveland, in 1912 for Governor of Ohio, in 1914 for United States Senator, in 1915 again for Mayor of Cleveland, in 1916 for Congress, in 1917 once more for Mayor of Cleveland, in 1918 again for Congress, and finally for the fourth time he was candidate for Mayor of Cleveland in 1919. But in order fully to appreciate what Ruthenberg meant as a leader of the Socialist Party in the open struggles of that time, it must be recalled that in his most memorable campaign—that for Mayor of Cleveland in 1917—he led the struggle while under conviction and sentence to prison for violation of the military conscription law, and that his campaign was so effective as to secure 27,000 votes out of a total of 100,000 cast in the election.

The youthful Ruthenberg had joined the Socialist Party during the flood tide that came with the Haywood-Moyer-Pettibone arrests in 1907 and the Haywood trial which tended to make of the Socialist Party a mass organization. But the influx of a vast number of proletarians more or less free from the class-collaboration ideology of the bureaucracy, inevitably brought a tension in the Party. Ruthenberg more and more emerged as a leader of the revolutionary trend. The party constitutional amendment which forbade the advocacy by any party member of "unlawful" methods of class struggle, and the expulsion of William D. Haywood from the National Executive Committee in 1912, brought sharp inner conflicts in which Ruthenberg became a leader of the Left. He kept clear of the anarcho-syndicalist illusion which caused the dropping out of a large part of the Left section of the party under Haywood's influence.

When the United States entered the World War in 1917 the Left-Wing was strong enough to compel the calling of a special convention of the Party to consider its attitude toward the war, and at this emergency convention held at St. Louis, the leadership of the revolutionary wing fell to Ruthenberg. A majority of the convention having been won through the pressure of the Left elements to adopt an anti-war resolution, * Ruthenberg went to the Party

* The "Old Guard" of the S.P. have since repeatedly claimed credit, both for themselves and the present S.P., for the St. Louis resolution. Actually by their deeds immediately following the convention, the Hilquit-Berger machine proved its cynical disregard for the will of the preponderant majority of the membership by reducing the resolution to a mere scape of paper. We need but remember that when Meyer London, the only Socialist Congressman during the war, had flagrantly violated the St. Louis resolution by voting for the war budget and other war measures, he was not even censured, let alone expelled from the party. This despite a provision in the Constitution, adopted in 1915 through a referendum, by a vote of 11,041 to 782, to the effect that "any member of the S.P., elected to an office, who

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membership and to the public in mass meetings with a vigorous revolutionary propaganda against the government and the imperialist war. Ruthenberg was soon arrested, tried, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Securing a temporary release on bail while his appeal was pending, Ruthenberg conducted, as the Socialist candidate for Mayor of Cleveland, an election campaign which broke all precedents and stands out even to this day in the annals of revolutionary use of the parliamentary forms of capitalist "democracy". His position was unrelenting:

> "This is not a war for freedom. It is not a war for the principles of mankind. It is a war to secure the investments and profits of the ruling class of this country. . . . The only reason we are in this war now is because it is in the interests of the ruling class, the capitalist class of this country, to have us in the war."

The Ohio organization of the Socialist Party had already become the strongest, relatively, in the whole country, through its rapid growth under Ruthenberg's leadership, and the effect of his election campaign was to win more than one-fourth of the entire vote of Cleveland in the midst of the mobilization and of the wildest war hysteria and terror whipped up by the capitalist press, aided by Woodrow Wilson's demagogy.

The end of the Cleveland election campaign was almost simultaneous with the October Revolution in Russia. But toward the end of January, 1918, Ruthenberg's appeal was rejected and he was locked into prison at Canton, Ohio, on February 1, where he remained ten months. When Ruthenberg was released, the war had come to an end. 1918-1919 was the period of the definite, political and organizational, crystallization of the Left-Wing within the Socialist Party, in response to the world-shaking effects of the Russian October Revolution and the influence of Lenin's writings, which began to reach this country in English translation. Ruthenberg took a leading part in the formation and shaping of the Left Wing. He continued at the same time his active leadership of the local organization in Cleveland and the mass agitation which he carried to even greater heights. On May 1, 1919, the May Day demonstration organized and led by Ruthenberg reached huge proportions and unequalled militancy. For the first time in this century

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shall in any way vote to appropriate money for military or naval purposes, or war, shall be expelled from the party." Moreover, in 1918, in the face of bitter opposition on the part of the Left-Wing elements, the Hilquit group forced through London's renomination. Similarly with the Socialist members of the New York Board of Aldermen, who, under the leadership of Algernon Lee, voted on several occasions for measures in support of the war.

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the trade unions of the American Federation of Labor of that city practically as a whole entered consciously and officially into a revolutionary demonstration. Forty thousand workers, including the membership of 50 trade unions of the A. F. of L. carrying their trade union banners, marched in a giant procession following the red flag of revolution. The parade was attacked by the police and military forces of the State with fire-arms and army tanks; street fighting lasted many hours and two policemen were killed. Reprisals took the form of wrecking the offices of the Socialist Party, but the morale of the workers during the entire episode held firm. The party grew by leaps and bounds. The leadership of Ruthenberg had introduced into the party something new which vitalized it.

The Socialist Party was seething with revolt against the reformist leadership. The Left Wing was making rapid headway. In the spring of 1919 the Left Wing won a sweeping victory against the reformists, electing by an overwhelming majority vote 12 out of 15 members of the National Executive Committee as well as the International Delegate and International Secretary. But the Hilquit bureaucracy, the protagonists of "democracy", refused to vacate their offices. The old N.E.C. declared the elections invalid and proceeded to expel from the Party the largest foreign-language federations and the whole organization of the party in the State of Michigan (later also the whole State organizations in Ohio and Massachusetts), as well as a number of local organizations. At the same time the N.E.C. called an emergency convention for the end of August. It was clear that the reformist bureaucracy was determined at all costs to retain control of the S.P.

This was the situation when the Left-Wing met in a National Conference, in June, 1919, in New York. Here a sharp division developed. One tendency was represented by Russian and other Slavic immigrant workers, who felt that the superior revolutionary experience of the Russian immigrants justified their taking the leadership of the Left Wing. To Ruthenberg fell the main leadership of the other current, which felt that the revolutionary party in the United States must be imbedded in the American proletarian masses. Linked up with this was a tactical question, the question of the best moment to make the formal break with the S.P. Ruthenberg again showed his instinct for mass leadership, insisting that the Left Wing must continue the struggle within the S.P. until the convention, with the view to extending the ideological and organizational influence of the Left Wing, particularly among the native American members of the S.P. in the West and Middle West where the Left Wing had not carried on such prolonged and consistent activities as in the East. The conference decided to issue a call for a convention,

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to be held parallel with the scheduled S.P. Convention, to found the new party. Ruthenberg submitted to the decisions of the conference, thus upholding already in this formative period the principle of revolutionary discipline on which the Bolshevik Party is based.

In September, 1919, as a result of the division in the Left Wing, two separate Communist Parties were formed, both of which together had a considerably larger membership than the remnant of the Socialist Party over which the reformists retained control.

Seeing the Communist organizations rapidly expanding at the expense of the reformist party, the United States Government, on the eve of 1920, organized a series of simultaneous raids in all parts of the country upon both Communist Parties. Many thousands of workers were arrested. Four thousand were in prison at one time. Previously, in a number of states, mass raids were carried out by city and state authorities. In Chicago all the delegates who participated in either of the two Communist Conventions were indicted under the "criminal-syndicalism" law. Ruthenberg and the other members of the National Council of the Left Wing had also been indicted in New York.

The two young Communist organizations were seriously crippled by this mass terror. Then, upon a plan worked out by Comrade Ruthenberg, the Communists began to organize the underground Communist movement. A network of nuclei was built up throughout the country, composed of the firmest remnants of the shattered legal parties. There were still two parties and their activities consisted chiefly of internal party propaganda, quarrels between the two parties, and the discussion of more or less abstract theoretical points. Gradually the approach to the masses was slightly developed, but the chief characteristic was direct sectarianism. Ruthenberg had begun the development of plans to draw the young Communist Party into open contact with the masses, when he had to stand trial on the New York indictment, in the middle of 1920. Convicted and refused admittance to bail while the appeal was pending, he was jailed in the New York State prison at Sing Sing. While he sat in prison the two Communist Parties were united. Establishing connections with comrades outside, Ruthenberg worked in prison on a plan for the legalization of the Communist Party. These efforts found their fruit in the establishment of the "Workers' Party" at the end of 1921. Shortly after the establishment of the legal party, Ruthenberg was released from prison and became its Executive Secretary.

The Communist Party had been born in the wake of the World War, in the midst of the fast-mounting class struggles of the fall of 1919. In the great steel strike which was at that moment raging,

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another man was emerging as organizer of a quarter-million steel workers of that time, and destined to become the foremost revolutionary leader that has been produced in the struggles of the trade unions. Inevitably William Z. Foster's course as combat-leader of that greatest of all strikes in America up to that time led him to a knock-down-and-drag-out fight with the bureaucracy that betrayed the strike. A few months after the strike ended Foster attended the Constituent Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions and became one of the founders of this International. His standing as the foremost leader of strike struggles in America placed him immediately by the side of Ruthenberg as co-leader of the Communist Party, at the time precisely when the Communist Party was beginning the decisive fight to break out of the sectarian shell that enveloped it. Ruthenberg's own judgment of our Party's early sectarianism in relation to the great steel strike—an estimate written in 1926—is itself very instructive:

> ". . . and so the Communist Party in 1919 was little more than a propaganda society teaching the lesson of the proletarian revolution to be learned from the experiences of the workers in the European countries.
>
> "It is true that the Party tried to connect this propaganda with the events of the struggles of the workers of this country. Thus, the Communist Party, during the four months of open existence which the government permitted it in 1919, entered actively into the struggle of the workers—*the great steel strike and the miners' strike* of that period. It did not, however, enter these struggles with a program of fighting the immediate battles and aiding the workers to win their fight but rather to use the event of the struggle for the purpose of carrying on agitation to show the necessity of the overthrow of the capitalist State power and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat.
>
> "The Communist Party of 1919 stood *outside of the labor movement*, endeavoring to draw the workers into its ranks through agitation and propaganda which pointed to the necessity of a revolutionary party fighting for the overthrow of capitalism." (My emphasis.)

Ruthenberg sharply condemned this non-Marxian, non-Leninist position, saying:

> "The struggle out of this sectarian position was a hard and long one. It lasted through the years 1920 and 1921."

Ruthenberg saw the victorious outcome of this struggle in two major changes: (1) the adoption of the Leninist policy, the correct Communist policy of establishing the Party base firmly in the industries—"making every factory a fortress"—thus making the Party an integral part of the mass labor movement, and (2) the bringing of the Communist Party out of its underground existence into legal existence.

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If these two major changes occurred mainly while Ruthenberg was in Sing Sing prison, it was nevertheless under Ruthenberg's guiding hand that these changes were brought about. Well we remember the first Central Committee meeting at which Ruthenberg appeared when he was released from prison, in the early part of 1922, after the formation of the open "Workers' Party" and after the party had, with Foster's aid, already begun to bring into the Party a great number of revolutionary-minded trade unionists. "Our C.E." came to the Central Committee session almost directly from the train that brought him from the prison where he had spent many months. He walked into the room in a matter-of-fact way, as though he had just returned from lunch, and immediately entered calmly into the discussion of all affairs. It was astonishing to see that he did not seem even to lack orientation on Party events after his long isolation in prison. "C.E." was that kind of a man. He was not even a member of the Central Committee at the time; but we all knew that he had largely guided the Party course in its main and decisive step, even while imprisoned. This was the time of the first conscious, organized struggle to clear the Party of sectarian fogs and to face the masses. Foster was aware from the beginning that Ruthenberg was the Gibraltar upon which he could depend for support in that tremendous turn of the Party which it was Foster's role to bring about—the sharp reorientation of the Party on the trade-union question in line with the decisions of the First Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions. In the succeeding years of bitter factional struggles, Ruthenberg and Foster often appeared—and not always artificially—as representatives of opposing tendencies in the Party. Yet to comrades who are familiar with the history of the Party a striking fact stands out, that these two leaders on several important occasions cut across factional lines and stood together because of that quality they held in common—a revolutionary instinct for the masses. This is particularly true in regard to trade-union questions. It is not an accident, but rather symbolic of the whole later course of the Party evolution, that our present General Secretary, Comrade Earl Browder, was first co-opted into the Central Committee as the strongest link between the Ruthenberg-led Central Committee in New York and Comrade Foster, whose duties under the circumstances of the time required his constant presence in Chicago.

If we speak of our Comrade Ruthenberg as the founder of the Communist Party of the United States, we must not be deceived by our own words. In the narrow sense of the development of an American Bolshevism outside of the current of world events, no individual played such a role in this country. Ruthenberg himself

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would be the first to rebuke such an absurdity. A half-year before he died, he wrote:

> "The movement which crystallized in the Communist Party had its origin and gained its inspiration from the proletarian revolution in Russia. Although there was a Left-Wing in the Socialist Party as far back as 1912, which fought against barring the advocacy of a revolution by force [Ruthenberg refers to the struggle which included the expulsion of Haywood, etc.], although it was under the pressure of this Left Wing that the St. Louis declaration against the World War was made, it was not until the end of the year 1918 that this Left Wing took a definite form." *

Ruthenberg had the capacity to place the revolutionary cause in its native American terms, to show that the reasons, the crying, undeniable need for the Revolution and Socialism, the first stage of Communism, arise out of American soil and the conditions of American life. But to the marrow of his bones he was always an internationalist, a Communist, with the most belligerent hatred of nationalist bias, of chauvinism or the least concession to it in the labor movement. He was fortified with Leninist spirit against the weak and shameful tendency to find in the *peculiar* features of his native country a path to the theory of its being "excepted" from the general laws of capitalist development, and thus a path to support of "our own" capitalist class. He would have been the first to agree, had he been alive in 1929 with Comrade Stalin's words:

> "It would be wrong to ignore the specific peculiarities of American capitalism. The Communist Party in its work must take them into account. But it would be still more wrong to base the activities of the Communist Party on these specific features, since the foundation of the activities of every Communist Party, including the American Communist Party, on which it must base itself, must be the general features of capitalism, which are the same for all countries, and not its specific features in any given country. It is on this that the internationalism of the Communist Party is founded. Specific features are only supplementary to the general features."

It was precisely in the struggle against the anti-internationalism (we might stretch a term and call it the "exceptionalism" of Hillquit's time), no less than the other phases of opportunism in the Socialist Party, that our Ruthenberg became a pillar of American revolutionary history; precisely in the struggle for the unconditional affiliation to the Communist International. What a shameless thing for a shoddy, wavering adventurer—a Lovestone, to stultify the memory of this great internationalist by making dishonest use of it in the

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* *Workers' Monthly*, Sept., 1926.

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renegade work of slandering and fighting the Party that Ruthenberg founded! The name of Ruthenberg used in the service of the capitalist class that he hated!

The development of the great leader Ruthenberg up to that high degree of clarity which placed him at the head of the revolutionary forces of the Socialist Party at the time of crisis ten years later and made him the founder of the Communist Party—was finally and decisively determined by (1) the World War and the necessity of taking the revolutionary Marxist stand against it, and (2) the Russian Revolution and the world-wide necessity of all Socialist parties and their elements to take their position, once for all, for or against the world-revolutionary cause in their own countries. These were the great melting-pots of 1914-17.

Now there are thousands—many thousands!—of young Socialists who grew to manhood and womanhood *after* the time of those great tests. These younger comrades have matured during a time of renewed pacifist illusions when, in regard to war, it was easy for opportunist leaders to "prove" that "it can't happen again", or, after each sharp recurrence of war-menace, to reassure the masses that the danger had been met and overcome by and within the capitalist system. Also the white-hot experience of the October Revolution has not been theirs; it has been possible for opportunists to point to "democratic (capitalist-democratic) development toward Socialism" in Germany and England and Austria, and with shameless repetitions of capitalist slanders to obscure the most powerful, the decisive force in history today—the successful building of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

But these thousands of young Socialist comrades are now facing also the crisis in their own lives. They have believed themselves to be a part of the batallions of struggle for Socialism. But now they see the Second World War shaping before their eyes; and not even the foulest sycophant of reformism can longer lie that War is not catapulting upon us. And again the leaders of the Second International and of the American Socialist Party are following a course which means striving to prevent a united struggle of the masses against war! And at the same time the mirage of Ramsay Macdonald's "Socialism", the mirage of "Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske Socialism" in Germany, and the mirage of "Vienna Socialism" give way to the ugly desert where the black vultures Hitler and Starhemberg claw the bones of murdered Socialist and Communist workers alike.

We ought, therefore, to use the occasion of Ruthenberg's anniversary to bring home to the young revolutionary workers who are now in the Socialist Party, some of the history of that party in

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which "our C.E" played the most heroic as well as, in the long run, the most decisive part. The most heroic part because it was the part of *real* struggle for Socialism. The most decisive part because it led inevitably by its own logic of honesty to the break with the Socialist Party and the founding of the only party which is leading the American working class in the struggle for Socialism—the Communist Party.

This is the lesson of "our C.E."

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The Historic Path of the Zinovievist Group

By ALBERT RADIER *

JUST before the October Revolution, Lenin defined in his first "Letter from Afar" the brilliant plan of tactics of the proletarian party. The Party rallied around Lenin's program.

As a consequence, Lenin, at the head of the working class, realized this plan and assured the victory of the Socialist revolution of October—the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Zinoviev and Kamenev took a stand against Lenin's plan. They asserted falsely that the organization of the masses toward the struggle for the conquest of the dictatorship of the proletariat was adventurism.

In place of that, Zinoviev and Kamenev proposed fraternization with the petty bourgeois parties and the tactic of the united front with the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries on the ground of bourgeois democracy. In brief, in opposition to *Lenin and to Stalin*, Zinoviev and Kamenev wanted to stop at the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution.

At the conference of the Party, which took place in April, 1917, and which realized the general mobilization of the Party, Kamenev attacked Lenin and defended liberal bourgeois conceptions.

At the meeting of the C.C., in October, 1917, which was decisive for the destiny of the October Revolution, Zinoviev and Kamenev voted against the insurrection. This historic resolution was adopted against their incensed resistance. The C.C., at the same time, made a decision which forbade Zinoviev and Kamenev to interfere publicly with its resolution. Despite this formal prohibition, Zinoviev and Kamenev published in the *Novaya Zhizn*, a newspaper that always went hand in glove with the bourgeoisie, a declaration against the Leninist C.C. and the whole Party.

Lenin wrote on this subject:

> "Kanenev and Zinoviev have *betrayed* to Rodzyanko and Kerensky the decision of the Central Committee of their party about the armed uprising and about concealing from the enemy the preparations for the armed uprising and the choosing of a date for the armed uprising. This is a fact. No subterfuges can do away with this fact. By their gossipy lie two members of the Central Com-

* Translated from *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, Vol. XII, No. 3, Feb. 1, 1935

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mittee have *betrayed* to the capitalists the decision of the workers. There can and must be only one answer to this: an immediate decision of the Central Committee saying that:

"Recognizing in Zinoviev's and Kamenev's appearance in the non-Party press all the elements of strike-breaking, the Central Committee expels both from the Party." (Lenin, *Toward the Seizure of Power*, Vol. II, p. 135.)

The infamous treason of Zinoviev and Kamenev was not without consequences. October 24, the eve of the day fixed for the insurrection, Kerensky delivered a sanguinary speech before the Parliament, in which he threatened the Bolsheviks with extermination by fire and by sword. The following night, the troops of the Provisional Government began to march to occupy the premises of the Bolshevik centers and newspapers. When the working masses of St. Petersburg, under the leadership of the Party and Lenin and Stalin, stormed, in the battle of October, the fortresses of the feudal-bourgeois power and established their own dictatorship. Zinoviev and Kamenev stood aside as deserters and veritable traitors to the armed insurrection.

However, their criminal struggle against the Party, against the victorious revolution, did not stop here; they carried it on as energetically on the morrow of the conquest of power. In place of recognizing immediately their fatal error and correcting it within the ranks of the Party, under the leadership of Lenin, in place of putting all their forces at work to fortify and consolidate this new power, won with the blood of the workers and peasants, Zinoviev and Kamenev, strike-breakers and deserters, proposed to restore this power to the bourgeoisie.

After the revolution, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to reduce to nothing the victory of the revolution by the creation of a so-called "unified Socialist power" in place of the new revolutionary government led by Lenin. They demanded at one time the total disarmament of the Bolsheviks, the dissolution of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the submission of the armed revolutionary forces to the municipal self-government, and, above all, the removal of Lenin from the position of chief of the government. It is superfluous to demonstrate that the sum total of these demands would have meant delivering to the class enemy the positions gained at great cost.

Zinoviev and Kamenev fought against Lenin and against the Party for the creation of such a government.

As the Party repulsed resolutely these demands, Zinoviev and Kamenev, as well as their followers of that time, handed in their resignation from the Central Committee. With the full support

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of Zinoviev, Kamenev, at the meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, opposed to the Leninist resolution of the Bolsheviks his own reformist resolution, which was a jumble of the views of various petty-bourgeois parties. But the Party, led by Lenin and Stalin, did not yield to the ultimatum of this grouplet of strike-breakers.

On the demand of Lenin, Zinoviev and Kamenev were removed from the leadership and from all work of the Party.

In Kamenev's place, it was Sverdlov who took the post of President of the All-Russian Executive Committee. From the mutual banqueting and the amiable embraces of Kamenev with the merchants of Atchinsk after the February Revolution, from the telegrams of salutation to the heir of the throne of Michael Romanov to the cowardly capitulation and to the direct treason during the October days, to the demand for the surrender of the conquered power, to the infamous compromises of Zinoviev and with the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries—such was the way and the role of Zinoviev and Kamenev in 1917. It was not for nothing that Lenin said that their errors of 1917 were no accidents.

* * *

It was at the Fourteenth Congress, in December, 1925, that this group, for the first time, opposed itself openly to the Party. The majority of the delegates from the Leningrad organization, previously culled with care and directed by Zinoviev—at that time a member of the Political Bureau and of the Central Committee of the Party—demanded a political co-report with the Central Committee. The co-reporter of the Zinoviev group defended the theory of the impossibility of the construction of Socialism in the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat, underestimated the role of the middle peasantry, and evidenced panic before the growth of the kulaks. He regarded the Socialist enterprises as nothing but State capitalism, and demanded liberty for fractions within the Party. In this manner, the Zinoviev group unmasked itself. The Congress condemned unanimously the group's action as an attempt at revision of the bases of Leninism. From this time on, the Zinoviev group was pledged to the road of factional methods and of struggle against the Party. They violated in this manner the fundamental principles of Bolshevik discipline. The Zinoviev group, void of all support of the masses of the Party, began to seek allies among the other enemy groupings of the Party. After the Fourteenth Congress, the leaders of the Zinoviev group, who had interfered just before against Trotzkyism, passed over openly to the ideological position of Trotzkyism and formed a bloc with it. From this re-

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sulted the eclecticism in the tactic and the absence of political principles which were at the base of the bloc of the Trotzkyists with the "new opposition", gathering together the most diverse tendencies hostile to the Party. In its uninterrupted attacks against the Party, the opposition went so far as to form its own illegally organized fraction, went as far as illegal meetings. From illegal meetings, it passed to open hostile actions against the Party and against the Soviets. The Zinoviev group transformed itself finally and definitely into a Menshevik group, enemy of Leninism, which capitulated before the forces of the international and interior bourgeoisie and became thus the instrument of the third force against the regime of the proletarian dictatorship. It is not surprising, thus, that the *Poslednie Novosti*, organ of the White-Guardists of Paris, could ardently hail the undermining work of the Zinoviev group and might see in it its ally. This newspaper wrote at the time:

> "The Zinoviev group has become not only ideologically, but also organically the center of the strata which are hostile to the proletariat, which are tired of the regime of the proletarian dictatorship and which actually aspire to its overthrow."

Each time that Zinoviev and Kamenev underwent a failure and came into conflict with the aroused resistance of the Party and of the working class, these strike-breakers put on a mask of humility and devotion, repented promptly their mistakes and continued promptly, all the same, but in secret, their infamous work to the detriment of the revolution and to the great joy of its enemies. They formed unprincipled blocs with other opposition groups, enemies of the Party, and with counter-revolutionary associations; they made sheep's eyes at the Menshevik Trotsky. Daily they strengthened their secret organization and gained to it the hesitant elements, those who had disingrated or who had entered by chance into the Party or the Young Communist League. They gave themselves out as instructors of the youth and innoculated the weaker elements among the youth with a bestial hatred for the leaders of the revolution.

Beaten in the open political battle, unmasked before the masses, the miserable remnants, the vile scum of the Zinoviev group began to take recourse as a last means to the White-Guardist bandits and fascists: to individual terror. One of the best sons of the Bolshevik Party, Kirov, fell victim to these cowardly murderers sent by the class enemy.

* * *

The assassins of Kirov have appeared as the most despised emis-

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saries of the class enemy, as hired scoundrels, as cowards and traitors. History will nail to the pillory of the degenerates of the human race the assassins of Kirov and the instigators of the murder. Their names will remain cursed forever. It is not by chance that the revolver was held by the hand of Nikolaev. It is not by chance that the mortal blow was struck at Smolny by one of the last adherents of the Zinoviev opposition. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, Salutsky, Bakaev, Kouklin, Kotolynov, Roumiantzev, Shatzky, Tolmasov—these names awaken in the Party the memory of long years of hypocritical counter-revolutionary labor.

From unfruitful attempts at distorting the doctrine of Marx and of Lenin, from discrediting the Leninist leadership of the Party, from vain attempts at shaking the iron unity of the ranks of the Bolsheviks to direct treason to the cause of the working class, to the accomplishment of the missions of the class enemy, to the mobilization of all fascist forces which are hostile to the U.S.S.R., and to the creation of illegal, anti-Soviet, terrorist groups—such is the logical path of factional struggle.

The tribunal stated that the "Moscow Center" of adherents of Zinoviev had not directly incited the terrorist plans or acts. But, on the other hand, the inquiry demonstrated irrefutably that the leaders of the "Moscow Center" were aware of the terrorist tendencies, of the hatred for the Party leadership, and created in their closed circles such an atmosphere that the pistol shot was inevitably the fatal result. That is why the proletarian tribunal condemned these people.

The millions of toilers, the millions of workers and collective farmers who fought passionately for Socialism, had already judged these people. The millions of workers had demanded an unpitying punishment of the guilty ones. The proletarian tribunal demonstrated itself as generous and has even left life to the principal accused. But it placed them under lock and key in order to protect the country from them, in order to protect the country from people who had fallen to the last degree of moral and political abjectness and who had become dangerous enemies of the land of Soviets.

The Party and the working class will draw from this the lessons which imposed themselves. Never yet has the thesis of Lenin—all opposition which continues its struggle ends inevitably in the camp of counter-revolution and becomes the point of attraction for all the counter-revolutionary forces—been so brilliantly verified. It is not for nothing that we find in the capitalist and reformist camp so many defenders of these gentlemen. It is not for nothing that these defenders have spread throughout the world so many stupidities about the Soviet Union; it is not for nothing that they have

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puffed up the affair of the Zinovievists into a grandiose conspiracy, which would have even entailed, as it were, great battles in the street. These gentlemen will not succeed in harming the Soviet policies. The Bolshevik Party and the working class of the U.S.S.R. and of the entire world will strengthen their vigilance and will respond by a powerful rallying of their forces around their leadership, around Stalin, whose name has become the symbol of great and glorious victories of socialism.

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The Anniversary of the Paris Commune and the Struggle Against Fascist Terror

By ANNA DAMON

SIXTY-FOUR years ago, on March 18, 1871, the working class of Paris, for the first time in the world's history, took power into its own hands. The workers had not been prepared and trained for this struggle. They had no experienced revolutionary party to guide and lead them. Paris was besieged by the forces of the counter-revolutionary Versailles government and isolated from the rest of the country. In the face of these tremendous odds against them, the workers of Paris for over two months fought fearlessly and tirelessly to maintain their government. Tens of thousands died fighting in its defense.

On the seventy-seventh day the workers were defeated and the Paris Commune was crushed. The superior forces of the Versailles army, augmented by thousands of French war prisoners released by Bismarck for the express purpose of suppressing the Commune, had penetrated into the city. But for days the workers continued to fight on the streets, behind barricades. Only on May 28, 1871, the Versaillese succeeded in clearing the last barricades.

Not satisfied with the thousands of lives lost by the working class on the firing lines, the enraged bourgeoisie wreaked terrible vengeance on the proletariat of Paris. Thousands of workers were killed outright, about 45,000 were arrested and many of them later executed, thousands were imprisoned and exiled. It has been estimated that about 100,000 Parisians, including the flower of the working class, lost their lives as a result of this historic struggle.

The Paris Commune was defeated, but the Communards did not fight in vain. They not only left a glorious legacy of heroic struggle, of "storming the heavans", a tradition of indomitable courage in the face of overwhelming odds—they fought the first decisive battle in the war to end all exploitation and slavery the world over which brought invaluable lessons to the working class.

Marx said of the Paris Commune: "History has no such examples, no such greatness. . . ." Lenin, discussing the significance of the Paris Commune, wrote:

"The Commune did not fight for any local or narrow national

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> aim, but for the freedom of toiling humanity, of all the downtrodden and oppressed. As the foremost fighter for the social revolution, the Commune has won sympathy wherever there is a proletariat struggling and suffering. The picture of its life and death, the sight of a workers' government which seized the capital of the world and kept it in its hands for over two months, the spectacle of the heroic struggle of the proletariat and its sufferings after defeat—all this has raised the spirit of millions of workers, aroused their hopes and attracted their sympathies to the side of socialism. The thunder of the cannon in Paris awakened the most backward strata of the proletariat from deep slumber, and everywhere gave impetus to the growth of revolutionary Socialist propaganda. This is why the cause of the Commune did not die. It lives to the present day in every one of us.
>
> "The cause of the Commune is the cause of the social revolution, the cause of the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers. It is the cause of the proletariat of the whole world. And in this sense it is immortal."

The cause of the Commune did not die. The spirit of the Commune has lived on. The defeated Paris Commune has come to rich fruition in the victorious proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917. Led by Lenin and the Leninist party, which had studied the achievements and defeat of the Paris Commune, the Russian working class and toiling masses profited from the lessons of the Commune and irrevocably overthrew the yoke of the bourgeoisie over one-sixth of the earth's surface. They had learned the lesson of the Paris Commune, that the bourgeois State machinery cannot serve as an instrument of the proletarian revolution, that "the working class cannot simply take possession of the ready-made machinery of the State and set it going for its own ends", that they must break it up, shatter it, and establish in its place the dictatorship of the proletariat, Soviet Power. With a firmly entrenched proletarian dictatorship, under the guidance of the Communist Party, the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union have beaten back all attempts of the Russian and international bourgeoisie at the restoration of capitalist power. And they are now well on the way to the eradication of all vestiges of capitalism and the completion of a socialist, classless society.

The cause of October—the cause of the Paris Commune—marched onward, beyond the borders of Russia. A wave of revolutions and mighty revolutionary movements swept the capitalist world. Aroused by the ravages of the World War and the ensuing crisis of capitalism, and inspired by the October Revolution in Russia, the working class in Finland, in Hungary, Italy, Germany, came to grips with the capitalist class. But here, thanks to the absence of steeled mass revolutionary parties and the betrayals of the Social-Democratic leaders, the workers were defeated. And again, as in

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Paris after the defeat of the Commune, the working class experienced the brutal vengeance of the triumphant bourgeoisie. Thousands of revolutionary workers were assassinated; scores of thousands were thrown into prisons and tortured.

It was at this time, when White terror was rampant in many of the capitalist countries, that, on the initiative of the Society of Old Bolsheviks, the International Red Aid was founded as a non-partisan organization with the aim of mobilizing the workers in united front action to defend and aid the victims of capitalist terror. In 1923, shortly after its foundation, the International Red Aid designated March 18, the anniversary of the Paris Commune, as I.R.A. day, calling upon its organizations in all countries to link up the commemoration of the Commune with the struggle against the capitalist terror and aid to its victims.

The years that passed since then have amply justified the foundation and existence of the International Red Aid (whose American section, the International Labor Defense, was founded in 1925 through the unification on a national scale of the existing local labor defense organizations). The I.R.A. sections have played an important role in developing mass defense actions, of national and international scope, against capitalist terror. It will suffice here to recall the mass demonstrations the world over in connection with the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the Scottsboro boys, the Reichstag fire frame-up.

The events of the past year, the onslaught of fascism in a number of European countries, the rapid advance of the fascist offensive in the U.S.A., lend greater significance than ever before to the commemorations of the Paris Commune this year. The fight against war and fascism, which threaten to engulf the entire capitalist world, against the increasing ruling class terror in the U.S.A., the ever-sharpening repression and violation of workers' rights, must be greatly strengthened. The struggle against new repressive legislation and for the repeal of the existing "criminal syndicalism" and similar repressive laws must be further stimulated and broadened. The struggle against the deportation terror and for the right of asylum for political refugees must be tremendously developed. The campaigns for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys, of Herndon, of Tom Mooney, of the Sacramento defendants, must be intensified. A revived and more vigorous drive for the freedom of Thaelmann, Rakosi, and the other victims of fascist terror are vital immediate tasks.

In the U.S.A., we face attacks against the working class that sharpen daily. Prosecutions under existing repressive laws, state and federal, multiply week by week. The deportation terror becomes

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more savage. Four bills providing for a federal sedition law on the same order as the present state laws, but more drastic, and for creation of a federal Red squad, have already been introduced in Congress, with an administration bill being prepared. Fifteen laws directed at sharpening the terror against the foreign-born have been brought into the House, and an administration bill is announced which, among other things, would give any employee of the Department of Labor the right to arrest anyone, citizen or non-citizen, without warrant, on suspicion of "being an illegally-entered alien" —an unprecedented strike-breaking measure. All of this is part of the reactionary drive to suppress the working class organizations, to drive underground the Communist Party, to sweep the country with fascist terror.

This situation demands more than ever the development of a united broad defense movement and the defeat of all splitting attempts (Trotskyite "Non-Partisan Defense League"; Matteoti Fund, and the newly organized "Labor and Socialist National Defense Committee").

The role played by the I.L.D. in the labor movement, and in the national liberation movement of the Negro people in the past year, is an indication of the possibilities and huge tasks that lie before it.

In the San Francisco General Strike, it was through the leadership of our Party in the I.L.D. that the united front was forged that took up the struggle it is now leading in defense of workers' rights to organize and strike, and to beat back the terror that was unleashed by the reactionary administration, the employers, and their fascist bands.

Everywhere in the struggles of the unemployed, the I.L.D. has played an increasingly important role in organizing the defense of those who fell victims to the attacks upon the starving workers and the defense of the very right of the unemployed to organize and struggle (Hillsboro, Ill.; New York City; Pittsburgh, Pa.; etc.).

In every part of the country, the I.L.D. has played an important part in the development of the struggle against war and fascism. This has not only taken the form of active participation in the building of the League Against War and Fascism, and in its congresses, but in the active development of the struggle through its own organization and through its direct contact with the masses. This is a basic point in the program of the I.L.D.

The struggle led by the I.L.D. against special repressive laws and their applications, the struggle against the activity of the fascist lynch gangs—a major task of the I.L.D.—are most important phases of the struggle against developing fascism and against war prepara-

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tions, as are the special I.L.D. campaigns for defense and relief to the victims of fascism in other countries, and its defense support to the struggles of the Negro and colonial peoples. These campaigns become very potent and direct stimulators of offensive struggles against developing fascism in the United States.

That around these campaigns the broadest united front can be built is quite clear. This becomes even more evident when we recall the struggle for the Scottsboro boys, a focal point in the whole fight for Negro rights and the national liberation of the Negro people. Millions of people in the United States and tens of millions all over the world have been drawn into participation in and support of the struggles of the Negro people through the fight for the lives and freedom of the Scottsboro boys, and Angelo Herndon. These include large masses of trade-unionists, of Negro and white people in every sort of organization brought together for the first time in united struggle, and great numbers never organized before. The fact that one of the very first acts of an I.L.D. branch recently organized among white textile workers in the South was to make a contribution for defense of the Scottsboro boys, is very significant in this respect.

The foregoing makes quite clear the importance of building the I.L.D. as an organization of and for the united front. The tasks of the Communists in relation to the I.L.D. grow out of this urgent necessity. In a speech at the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., Comrade Stassova, president of the I.R.A., said:

> "Comrade Knorin referred to the Sacco and Vanzetti case and said that the reaction to events in Germany is not the same as it was at that time. Is this a mere chance? No, comrades. Only because the Parties underestimate the political role of the I.R.A. and because of the fact that we do not get any good forces for our work, is it possible to have so little attention paid to such a great cause as the struggle against fascism. I am not here to ask for favors. We have a right to demand of the Communist Parties that they give us good forces so that we can achieve our final aim: the world revolution which will open the doors of the prisons."

The possibilities of involving large masses and developing real united front campaigns, through the I.L.D., by close attention, guidance, and leadership from the corresponding committees of our Party are illustrated by the experiences in San Francisco on a district scale, as well as on a national scale by the major campaigns of the I.L.D.

In order to effect the building of a powerful united front mass defense movement of the working class, under the leadership of the I.L.D., it is necessary that concrete and constant leadership, both

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political and organizational, be given to the I.L.D. from top to bottom by the corresponding Party committees. Functioning fractions must be built in the I.L.D. which will establish collective leadership, drawing in non-Party forces and assuring the carrying out of the correct united front policies. For this purpose it is also necessary for the Party to assign good forces to the I.L.D., forces of the type which would really be able to develop the united front and to build up the organization.

To carry out these struggles, a real campaign of enlightment within the Party is essential, so that every Party member should have a correct conception of what the I.L.D. is, and what its policies are. A year ago, in connection with the Ninth Anniversary of the I.L.D., the Agit-Prop Department of the Central Committee prepared an outline on the history and policies of the I.L.D., and the tasks of the Party in relation to it. A check-up shows that in many Districts this outline never reached the units, and in many units which it did reach, no discussion took place. A few quotations from this outline will help to clarify the tasks of the Party members in relation to the I.L.D. They are the tasks of the Party in a united front organization.

> "The Party fractions in the I.L.D. must take responsibility for the improvement of the I.L.D. and its work. They must study its basic program and learn how to apply it. . . The Party fractions in the trade unions and other mass organizations have the task, in relation to the I.L.D., of correlating the activities of the I.L.D. with those of their own organizations."

It goes without saying that these activities of the I.L.D. must be in line with the I.L.D. program, and not a duplication of the tasks of other organizations.

> "The tasks of the I.L.D. as an independent organization are its primary responsibility, although the I.L.D. should be rallied by the fractions to support the Party campaigns *in its independent character*. Only by strictly maintaining its non-Party character and its independence, will the I.L.D. reach those broad masses whom it is its task to draw into the class struggle and those elements which such an organization as the I.L.D. can best neutralize. If the non-Party character of the I.L.D. is not recognized, the I.L.D. will also fail to perform its function as a bridge between the masses and the Party, over which new forces will constantly progress into the revolutionary movement. . . . The greatest care must be exercised in the withdrawal of forces from the I.L.D., so that sufficient forces will not only be left to insure the proper functioning of the organization, but to insure its constant rapid growth."

By working in this manner, systematically and intensely, we will be preparing and developing the I.L.D. for its great tasks of

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carrying through united front activities around the campaigns for repeal of the anti-labor criminal syndicalism and related laws, for the defense of the victims of the anti-labor drive in which these laws are an important weapon of the ruling class, for the right of asylum for working-class political refugees in the United States. We shall be able to develop to even greater heights the campaigns for the liberation of the Scottsboro boys, Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings, Angelo Herndon, J. B. McNamara, Thaelmann, Rakosi and other class-war victims. In this way we shall be carrying out the great work begun by Karl Marx in 1848 and developed to even greater proportions by him after the fall of the Paris Commune, when he personally took charge of the task of organizing assistance, moral and material, for the victims of the Versailles terror and developed, in connection with this, a strong campaign for the right of asylum for the Paris Communards who were forced to flee to other countries.

In order to accomplish this, it becomes clearly necessary for the I.L.D. to be rooted in the shops and factories. The experiences of the I.L.D. in Germany, like those of the Communist Party itself, show that only where the organization has its base among the basic elements of the proletariat, can an effective struggle against fascism be developed.

As a means of fufilling a part of this task, the I.L.D. has initiated a recruiting drive for 5,000 new members, of whom at least 50 per cent must be factory workers, 50 per cent Negroes, and 35 per cent women, to be inaugurated on March 18, anniversary of the Paris Commune, and to continue as a special drive until June 28, tenth anniversary of the founding of the I.L.D.

The direct tasks of the Communists in the United States in this special drive are those already given by Comrade Browder:

> "The I.L.D. must be given capable leading forces from its supporting affiliated organization. . . . The I.L.D. must be really taken seriously and given all the help, political and organizational and material, needed to build the I.L.D. into a real broad mass organization, solidly based among the workers in the shops and capable of carrying our defense organization to new and higher achievements."

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Report to the National Agitation and Propaganda Conference, January 18, 1935

By ALEX BITTELMAN

COMRADES:

The Central Committee has placed the question of agitation and propaganda on its own agenda and decided to devote a whole day of discussion to this question. We must understand the significance of this decision. As far as I recollect, this is the first time that this question is given such emphasis at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee, and the meaning is two-fold. It is, first, to raise before the entire Party the great importance of agitation and propaganda at this particular period; and, second, in this way to raise the actual work of agitation to the height it must occupy at the present time.

I will divide my report into four parts: (1) the content of our agitation; (2) the question of methods and forms of agitation; (3) propaganda; (4) the organization of this work and development of agit-prop cadres.

First, a few general remarks. The contents of our agitation, as we agree, are determined by the Party's political line. As a matter of fact, the discussions which took place in the Central Committee plenum thus far have given us the main contents of our agitation. My task, therefore, will be to develop these contents further, from the particular agitational point of view.

We must approach the subject from the standpoint that the task of agitation and propaganda is to help the Party win the masses for the Party's general line, to win the masses for the Party's slogans. From this angle I will briefly restate what is the Party's general line at the present time. The Party's general line in this period is to mobilize the masses against the capitalist offensive, against capitalist reaction and fascization, against war preparations, and for the defense of the Soviet Union, on the basis of the united front policy, seeking to lead the masses up to the revolutionary way out, to the struggle for a Soviet America.

From this follow certain particular policies with which the Party approaches the masses, such as in the field of trade union work and the Labor Party. What are the main lines of agitation given to us by the Party's general line and slogans?

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I. STRUGGLE AGAINST THE NEW DEAL

One, *the exposure of the New Deal and the political enlightenment of the masses that are becoming disillusioned with the New Deal.* On this point the resolution before the Central Committee says that our task is to expose the Roosevelt policies, the policies of his fellow-travelers and opponents from the "Left". In reviewing the results of one of our latest mass campaigns, the election campaign, we have found that we have not carried out the agitation among the masses on this point either sufficiently or convincingly. We have not agitated sufficiently among the masses against the New Deal and there are perfectly well-known reasons why we have not done it. The Central Committee, at its previous meetings, has taken note of the fact that at the beginning of the New Deal there was to be observed among the weaker sections of the Party a certain hesitancy to attack it and a fear that this will make us unpopular among the masses. This has largely passed but was observed in the first phases of the New Deal. Also there was not enough realization of the danger of the demagogy of the New Deal. And third, a certain reliance on spontaneous (automatic) disillusionment.

This reliance on spontaneous disillusionment arises primarily from a failure to understand that, while a good deal of this disillusionment takes place spontaneously, the coming over of the disillusioned masses to Communist leadership does not take place spontaneously, because a variety of bourgeois agencies, such as reformists, semi-fascists, fascists, and others, are actively engaged precisely in catching those disillusioned masses to prevent them from coming our way. Suffice it to mention Sinclair and Olson on the one hand, and, on the other hand, Coughlin, etc.

The second point militating against the sufficient effectiveness of our propaganda and agitation against the New Deal is that *our agitation is not convincing enough.* In fact, it is in most places very little convincing. I would advise the comrades, when the Central Committee resolution is published, to read it over very carefully from this angle, and if there is one word that repeats itself more than any other it is the word "convincing". Talk to the workers in such language, with such arguments, that you can actually convince them. Otherwise, of what use is our agitation? About the agitation against the New Deal: I wish to comment upon several typically wrong agitational methods of argument that we meet with in our work. We meet with these wrong examples despite the fact that the Party, from the very first stages of the New Deal, has made a clear and correct analysis of the New Deal, has laid down the main lines of the contents of our agitation. And yet our agita-

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tors, many of them up to this date, are not managing to bring this resolution to the masses in such a way as to convince them.

One type of incorrect agitation is as follows: "N.R.A. is fascism", "Roosevelt and the New Deal are the same as Wall Street and the reactionary monopolies", "Roosevelt is the same as the Liberty League", etc. Is that the correct way of trying to convince the masses of the correctness of our analysis? I don't think so. What *is* correct, as the Party's resolutions have many times shown and proven, is that *the class content* of Roosevelt's policy is the same as that of fascism, of the Liberty League, the Wall Street monopolies, etc. The resolution of the Central Committee today speaks of the *class kinship* of these policies. This is the basic thing, this is precisely the idea which we must bring to the masses and convince them. But do you really achieve your objective when you tell the masses that Roosevelt is fascism, that the N.R.A. is the same as the Liberty League? No, you don't achieve that. Why? Because Roosevelt does not appear before the masses with all his methods in this form.

We know that there is a constant polemic going on between Roosevelt and his opponents from the Right. He has *different methods* of carrying through the capitalist policies, different from the Liberty League, different from the open fascists, and when we come to the masses and deny these obvious facts there immediately rises a wall between us and the masses which our agitation cannot penetrate.

Or take the other extreme of wrong argument. "Roosevelt is a liberal, and the N.R.A. does try to weaken the capitalists; all that is wrong with it is that it does not stand for revolution". Is this correct? Absolutely not. Roosevelt is not trying to weaken capitalism or the capitalists. He is carrying through essentially the policy of monopoly capitalism but with methods and phrases which are different from those of his opponents from the Right and the other open fascists in the United States. Let us take an example which might make it generally clear—Section 7A. What is the position of Roosevelt's opponents from the Right? Well, they are against the damn' thing. They want open shops, especially in the basic industries. They say that they can take care of the unions themselves. And what is Roosevelt's position? You know it. He's got the Section 7A which in essence works towards weakening the trade unions, obstructing their growth, helping the growth of company unions. Yet *in form* it is not the same thing as the open shops. And if we undertake to show the workers that Roosevelt stands for the same thing *without any further argument*, those workers whom you must reach will not very easily accept our arguments.

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Or take the question of unemployment insurance and relief. What is the position of Roosevelt's opponents from the Right? We know that they are against any sort and any from of unemployment insurance. The "dole" is about the most they are willing to grant, charity handled by the municipalities. What is Roosevelt's position? He is, as he says, for unemployment insurance. But what kind? Unemployment insurance for the unemployed of the *future;* no insurance for the millions that are unemployed today; "unemployables" (a convenient classification) to be shifted to the localities and charity and forced labor for the rest. In other words: the class content is the same, the class kinship with the monopolies is clear. It is to make the workers, not the capitalists, pay for the crisis. But the methods are different.

The point I am trying to make is that in agitating against the New Deal we have a double task. We have got to show first, what our resolution calls for, the kinship of Roosevelt's policies with the policies of the most reactionary capitalists. It is the policy of making the working class and the toilers generally pay for the crisis. That is the main point. At the same time, we must bring out the difference in their methods. We must bring out this difference and show its significance. The difference in the methods does not embarrass Roosevelt's opponents from the Right. It does not hamper the capitalist offensive. *Rather it facilitates the offensive.* If we carry on such a correct agitational work, we will be more convincing to the masses. We will succeed in winning the masses for the line and slogans of the Party.

II. EXPOSURE OF THE BOURGEOIS "LEFTS"

Take now the second line of agitation: *the political enlightenment of the disillusioned masses on the character of Roosevelt's opponents from the "Left".* I think on this point we have been very neglectful. We have not carried on up until lately a real agitational campaign throughout the country to expose the "Left" opponents of Roosevelt. Where we did carry on such campaign, it was not always convincing, because not always correct.

A couple of examples: Sinclair—here we meet again with two typical incorrect ways of combatting Sinclair and his program. Sinclair is characterized like fascism, if not completely fascist. And the opposite of it—"Sinclair is better than Roosevelt, but not revolutionary". In Minnesota—*re* Olson—we find similar wrong approaches. "Olson is as bad as Roosevelt"; or "Olson is better than Roosevelt, but not as good as the Communists". I think that this kind of argumentation is incorrect. It fails to convince the masses

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that we are correct, and thus we are indirectly pushing the masses into the arms of the "Left" opponents of Roosevelt.

Can we say that the Party has not given us a correct analysis of these developments? We cannot say that. It is essentially the failure on the part of the Party's agitators (and we have good agitators, many of them right here in this hall), writers and speakers to take the Party's line, concretize it and find correct arguments to convince the masses.

What is the Party's line in this connection? The Party proceeded from the correct characterization of Sinclair and Olson as opponents of Roosevelt from the "Left", and pointed out the task of our agitation among the masses. I list the most important:

1. To show that these are bourgeois-reformists who seek to maintain and preserve capitalism by reforms.

2. That their projected reforms are empty phrases, empty promises, because any worthwhile improvement in the conditions of the masses, though temporary, demands a deep cut in the profits and incomes of the rich—of the capitalists. And this the reformers are afraid to do, for fear of undermining capitalism as such. There was a time when the bourgeoisie was carrying through reforms and at the same time was still able to strengthen capitalism. That was before the general crisis of capitalism in its present phase. In the United States the bourgeoisie still has more maneuvering power, more resources than the European bourgeoisie, for the purpose of deceiving certain sections of the working class, yet these resources are becoming progressively more limited. This means that any serious concession, such as would really improve the conditions of the masses, even temporarily, means a very deep slash in the incomes and profits of the capitalists, and this will further undermine capitalism. Hence the bourgeois reformists, no matter how sincere they may be about wanting to make such reforms, will not do it because they will not do anything to undermine capitalism. Can this be explained to the masses agitationally? I believe we can. We have some first-class agitators to speak to the masses. But they will succeed only if they make the correct approach.

3. We always see that when confronted with mass struggles even for the most elementary demands, these bourgeois reformists invariably side with the capitalists. We can prove it. And when they are in power, they always use force to suppress such struggles. Take Olson in Minnesota.

4. These bourgeois reformists are tied by various strings to Roosevelt and his administration, collaborating with the New Deal. They let themselves be used by Roosevelt in the interests of the monopolies.

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5. In the measure in which bourgeois reformism succeeds in deluding the masses, the latter are drawn away from the revolutionary struggle. This, in the present period, helps the capitalist offensive and the fascization of capitalist rule.

6. The reformist panaceas of Sinclair and Olson are no way out for the masses. Their only way out is the program of the Communist Party. The Communist Party is ready to join with the masses that are willing to break away from the bourgeois parties, but are not yet ready to support the Communist program, in forming a Labor Party to fight against the capitalists, to secure such concessions as unemployment insurance (Workers' Bill), farmers' relief, Negro rights, the democratic rights of the masses, etc.

III. EXPOSURE OF ROOSEVELT'S OPPONENTS FROM THE RIGHT

I will now take up the third line of agitation—*the struggle against Roosevelt's opponents from the Right, the fascist and semi-fascist circles of monopoly capital.*

First let me say that this we do not do at all or very little. We seem to assume that all workers already know that Roosevelt's opponents from the Right are no good. We seem to assume that everybody knows that the Republican Party is no good. We seem even to assume that there is no need to expose the program of the Manufacturers' Association. We assume that this is so clearly a capitalist outfit that we do not have to tell the masses about it.

While it is true that in the Communist Party itself this is clear and that large numbers of non-Party workers know what we know, is it not time to begin to think in terms of two, three, or four million workers? I think this is the plain meaning of this Central Committee meeting. We must begin to think of ourselves as a Party that must win millions and for millions today the Right opponents of Roosevelt are not yet exposed. This is one reason why we must expose them. There is also a tactical reason for doing so. *It is in the measure in which we show clearly the class character of the Right opponents of Roosevelt that we can expose Roosevelt himself.* The Central Committee resolution says our task is to show the class kinship of Roosevelt and his Right opponents. You must show the capitalist reactionary character of his Right opponents, attack them in the first instance, and then you can show how Roosevelt carries out the class policies of his Right opponents though with different methods. It is for these two reasons that it is very important that we do not forget that the exposure of Roosevelt's opponents from the right is an essential part of our struggle against Roosevelt and his policies.

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In connection with the above, it is necessary to discuss further our agitation *against semi-fascist tendencies and ideologies.*

a. Hearst's anti-Communist campaign and the Dickstein Committee. On the whole, we have just begun a counter-campaign of mass agitation. In this we meet with the following wrong arguments:

The Hearst and Dickstein attacks are a defensive move by the bourgeoisie against the maturing revolution and the growing menace of Communism, or *these attacks are an offensive move by the bourgeoisie in preparation for further attacks upon the standard of living of the masses.*

Each one of these, *taken by itself,* is one-sided and, hence incorrect. The Hearst and Dickstein attacks contain elements of both, offensive and defensive. While the immediate cause for these attacks is undoubtedly to facilitate the offensive of the capitalists for a further reduction of the standard of living of the masses, yet it is just as undoubtedly true that the elements of *fascization* which these attacks contain are dictated by the growing fear of the bourgeoisie of the maturing revolutionary crisis and the growing revolutionary advance.

It is necessary once more to establish full theoretical clarity in our midst on the nature of fascization and fascism as defined by the Thirteenth Plenum which will enable us to adopt the correct methods of agitation against fascization in the United States.

b. The Coughlin ideology. It bears many characteristics of a fascist ideology. It increases its anti-capitalist demagogy but confines its "attacks" to "speculating" capital and to bankers without touching the capitalist system as a whole. It also makes increasing demagogy of the "democracy" of this country. At the same time it cultivates national chauvinism as against internationalism and projects the idea that the coming main battle and war will be between Communism and "Social Justice" which it claims to represent. Coughlin stands for "unions" but under governmental supervision which is clearly a move in the direction of fascism. He definitely tries to evade taking a position on the issues involved in the present capitalist offensive, especially in the automobile situation, thus exposing himself as an agent of the employers. He incites against the Soviet Union. We must widen our agitation against the fascist ideology of Coughlin, taking care that we do not brand as fascists all those workers and toilers who have let themselves be influenced by his demagogy and deception.

IV. POLITICALIZNG THE STRUGGLES

I will now take up the question, the next line of agitation, *to*

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mobilize the masses against the capitalist offensive. Since the Fourteenth Plenum of the Central Committee, it has been clearly established that the starting point of our agitation against the capitalist offensive are the immediate and partial needs of the workers in each factory and industry. What are the special problem that arise here? First, in line with the Fourteenth Plenum discussion and decisions, the correct formulations of partial demands. It will be agreed here that we made on this point considerable progress. But it is still a point to be placed as point one in our agitation against the capitalist offensive. Second, systematically raising the political level of our agitation leading up to the revolutionary way out, to Soviet Power. This is still being done very unsatisfactorily. I will cite one example from the San Francisco General Strike and one from the National Textile Strike. In the efforts to explain what the San Francisco General Strike really was, we find two types of incorrect explanations. One was that the general strike was the beginning of a revolution: the other that it was nothing but a strike for partial demands. I don't think either of the two is a correct agitational explanation and can really promote the partial struggles of the workers and raise them to higher political levels. There was no excuse for lack of clarity on this question. The Party, through the *Daily Worker* and otherwise, has given the content of agitation, but it has not always been picked up and developed correctly.

I think it would be necessary to refresh our minds on that point because in such an example we can see how to solve the task by starting out with immediate concrete demands of the workers and then raising them to higher political levels. The Party said:

First, the immediate purposes were partial demands. This had to be stressed heavily to dissipate lying enemy propaganda that the C.P. is interested only in revolution but not in partial demands, and to mobilize the maximum strength of the masses for the winning of these demands as the most effective way to revolutionize the masses. At the same time the Party stressed the political nature of this strike which in this period is of the greatest significance—the transition of every economic struggle to a political fight against the N.R.A. codes and against the N.R.A. as a whole and the emergence of sympathy strikes and general strikes.

Third, propagandistically such struggles as the general strike make it especially incumbent upon us to bring forward the revolutionary way out. And in the following manner. In that strike, and in similar strikes, the Party supported and led the masses to struggle for their immediate and partial demands and it did so because it is the only true independent working class Party, the Party of the socialist revolution and of the proletarian dictatorship.

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The San Francisco General Strike was not the prelude to the proletarian revolution because there was not yet a revolutionary crisis in the country. That crisis is now in the process of maturing. But when the revolutionary crisis has become mature a General Strike like the one in San Francisco will tend to become the prelude to the struggle for power. The Communist Party will aim to win the masses for such strikes throughout the country, for raising these strikes to higher levels, for the organization of Soviets as organs of struggle for power and, as conditions become fully mature, for the establishment of Soviet Power.

During the national textile strike we made a close examination of many of the leaflets issued by our Party during the strike. I want to cite only two examples. In District 3, Philadelphia, the section of Allentown issued very many leaflets during the strike, nearly one each day. Now as to their content. What do you find there? A good popularization of the strike demands. But when it came to exposing the reformists, they exposed the reformists in general, and there was practically no exposure of the local reformists in their own locality.

Most astounding, even when they were fighting police terror in Bethlehem, Pa., when they were projecting the idea of a sympathy strike for twenty-four hours, their agitation dealt with only one thing there, and that was against the chief of police. And while it was perfectly correct and necessary to arouse the masses against this policeman in Bethlehem, Pa., yet they failed to bring in his connection with the government, to bring in the political connections. In other words, there was a very weak raising of the agitation to higher political levels.

I take now an example from District 8. There I have two leaflets. There were more than two, of course, but I selected only two for the sake of discussion. One issued by Section 8. It was called "Support the Textile Strike". It is a fine statement of the strike demands and why all the workers must support the textile strike. It speaks of the textile code, but does not say a word about the N.R.A. They speak of the textile code as the enemy to be fought against, and they spoke of winning the immediate demands, but not a word of the position of the bourgeois political parties, of the agents of the bourgeoisie, nothing of the federal government; *and this is in the midst of our own election campaign.*

Sections 4, 5 and 9 of District 8 also jointly issued a leaflet, called "The Great Textile Strike Needs Your Support". This is a sample of a good leaflet. It calls for a mass protest meeting,—this is the purpose of the leaflet—in support of the textile strikers, at which Bob Minor was to speak. It states plainly what the strik-

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ers are fighting for; it explains the role of the N.R.A., the government and the role of our Party; it refers to the lessons of Toledo, San Francisco and Minneapolis and shows why the workers should support the strike. And all this is done in thirty lines of text, not a thesis. All this is done very plainly, which should go to show that there where we make efforts and try, we can turn out correct, mass, popular agitation. All I wish to know is whether this leaflet was written by the Section, or in the District headquarters? [Gebert—"It was written in the Section".] Well, so much the better. [Stachel—"The other was written in the District headquarters" —*laughter.*]

V. STRUGGLE FOR NEGRO RIGHTS

I will now, Comrades, pass on to the next line of agitation, *for Negro rights and against lynching.* Several problems arise at the present time for our agitation on this particular point. What are these problems. We all agree, and this is the general line of the Party, that on this question we must start out with exposing daily every manifestation of discrimination against Negroes and arouse the indignation of the masses against these discriminations. This, I believe, from what I could see, is still the weakest point, despite the fact that we have made slight progress. There is no doubt that there are thousands of cases in the U.S. similar in general nature to the Scottsboro case. But we don't bring them forward—many rases of great injustices committed against the Negroes, thousands upon thousands. But we don't dig them up; we don't bring them forward, and therefore don't arouse mass movements around them.

Another point is raising the struggle to higher levels along the lines of the Party program of Negro liberation. On this point we must say we have not yet learned how to raise struggles to higher levels. We find in our agitation that it is either one or the other: either the partial demands and nothing else, or just general Negro liberation, or a mechanical combination of both. To carry on an agitation, on the basis of rising partial struggles, from which naturally and logically arise the slogans and need for our full program, this we have not yet learned to do. But we must learn.

The struggle against white chauvinism. I think that it is predominantly agitation within the Party. When we make an agitational campaign against white chauvinism, it is so formed as to appeal to Communists or to close sympathizers. Our agitation against white chauvinism is not yet a mass agitation; it is mainly agitation for advanced workers. I must add at this point that white chauvinism will not be rooted out by mass agitation alone. On this point,

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perhaps, more than on any other, we must see that agitation is merely a part of daily mass struggle for Negro rights in which white and Negro workers are engaged.

On this point I wish to raise the following as an agitational approach to the white workers in the South, and the white workers generally. Recently I had occasion to speak to several comrades, white and Negro. They said: How can we more successfully approach to the white workers in the South, and white workers generally. Recently I had occasion to speak to several Southern comrades, building a Communist Party? They say it is difficult, and we know it is not easy. I am speaking here primarily of agitation. One of the central points of our Negro program is that the special backwardness and exploitation of the white masses in the South arise out of the remnants of Negro slavery; that not only does Negro national oppression rest upon the economic remnants of Negro slavery, but that also the general backwardness of the South results from the same thing. How often have we agitionally come to the white workers and explained to them that the reason you are backward in the South as compared with the North, the reason you have wage differentials in the South, the reason you are second-rate citizens in the country, the reason for all this backwardness, is because you are tolerating Negro slavery in the South? This, then, would be taking our resolutions and making them the property of the wider masses.

One more point on the same question, and this is the importance of the struggle against lynching at the present time. It has been reported, I recall, to one of our C.C. meetings, that at some conference, where our people were proposing to indicate that the fascization of the rule of the American bourgeoisie leads to a growth of lynching; that this was combatted by some liberals and also by the Lovestoneites. I think that the Party's position on this question is correct, but it should be more in our agitation. What is it? That while race superiority and national chauvinism do not originate with fascism, they are part of fascist ideology; that fascism incorporates and builds up to a tremendous extent precisely these features of national oppression. Secondly, that while lynching—and Negro national oppression—also does not originate with fascism, fascism marks a more intensive use of this weapon against the masses, against the Negroes in the first place, and also against the whites. There is no doubt that with the growth of fascism we will witness, first of all, a larger and wider resort to lynching not only in the South, and not only against the Negroes, but also against white militant workers. The need of seeing it from this angle, bringing it into our agitation, assumes first rate importance In the struggle against

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Negro reformism we must also develop more convincing arguments along with a wider application of the united front.

VI. WORKER-FARMER ALLIANCE *

There are special problems of agitation in this work. We must emphasize that:

a. Farmer agitation is not the task of only the "farmer" districts but of the whole Party, though the former have special tasks.

b. Not enough differentiation in the agitational approach to various strata of toiling farmers (small, middle, various regions, etc.).

c. To promote the struggle for the worker-farmer alliance under proletarian leadership in our agitation we must: show in each major struggle of the workers how the interests of the toiling farmers are thereby promoted—also vice versa—when workers are on strike, carry agitation to toiling farmers of that region and vice versa.

d. Our press should polemize with the farmer press of opponent organizations.

VII. URBAN MIDDLE-CLASS ELEMENTS

In this field, too, there are special problems of agitation.

a. We have the broad lines of approach to these elements: (1) insecurity under capitalism; (2) fascization and war; (3) join with the proletariat.

b. But we need a more differentiated approach to the *various strata* (technicians, professionals, small business men) and their daily grievances and *partial demands.*

c. We must bring to them more concretely the meaning of the workers' struggles from the standpoint of the interests of the middle-class elements and how the two can be linked up in practice.

d. This is the job not only of special literature or organs for these groups but of the entire Party agitation, though the former has special tasks in this connection.

Example: What agitation have we carried on among these middle classes in the Textile Strike? What are we doing along these lines in the preparation of the Steel Strike? Remember the important role these groups play in the one-industry communities.

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* Owing to lack of space this section, as well as the next section, on urban middle-class elements, are given here only in summary form.

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VIII. STRUGGLE AGAINST WAR AND FOR DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

On the question of mobilizing the masses against war and for the defense of the Soviet Union. What can we say on this point in connection with our agitation? I will list what I consider most essential: First, that we still do not bring the struggle against war and for the defense of the Soviet Union into our daily work among the masses. It still is a special campaign, when it does take place. Now, I certainly do not argue against the need for special anti-war work. This we must have. But at the same time there is the failure, as we have seen, to learn how to bring the struggle against war into our daily agitation. This is a very serious weakness.

Secondly, in the exposure of the growing danger of war, and the popularization of the peace policy of the Soviet Union. We have to state here, as was already stated in the C.C. Plenum, that lately we observe a certain lagging in our struggle against war preparations. It is important for us to understand where this lag arises from. We have not in the recent months waged a sufficient mass struggle against war. Why haven't we? I think the explanation for this lies in the following: There may be a wrong idea among some of the comrades that as long as there is no complete agreement between all great imperialist powers for a war against the Soviet Union, there won't be any war. This is a wrong idea and a fatal one. It is not at all absolutely necessary for all the imperialists to agree beforehand in order for an anti-Soviet war to break out. If you follow, as you must, the daily development of the inter-imperialist struggles and of the struggles between the imperialist powers and the Soviet Union you will observe on the part of Germany and Japan that there is a very definite policy of trying to place before the other imperialist powers an accomplished fact. The Japanese militarists and governing circles proceed from the idea, which is not altogether wrong; that while the other imperialist powers may be hesitating on the question of initiating a war, when the war has broken out, that is, when Japan has actually opened war against the Soviet Union, then the other fellows will make up their minds against the Soviet Union and not for the Soviet Union. The same orientation has gained considerable ground also among the ruling circles of German fascism. This can be very easily observed.

Now, comrades, if we have a clear realization that this is what Japan and Germany may be driving at (bringing about war in order to place the rest of the imperialist world before the alternative of either supporting the Soviet Union or fighting together with Japan against it), what do you think would happen if Japan and

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Germany would place the rest of the imperialist powers before this alternative? We need not speculate but certain things are already clear in every imperialist country today. There are powerful circles of capitalists, and they happen to be in the heavy industries and monopolies, who even today would like to see a war against the Soviet Union first of all and primarily.

Take the United States. What is the policy of our own bourgeoisie? Well, there are different trends in the bourgeoisie. The New Deal relations with Japan have sharpened very greatly, as you know, which has led to the break-up of the London Naval Conversations and perspective of a naval race. But the New Deal is trying to maneuver between the Soviet Union and Japan. The policy has been, and is still the chief line of policy of the American bourgeoisie, to weaken both by maneuvering, because American imperialism is not yet ready for war, but is preparing very feverishly for it. But at the same time you all know that the Morgan House and other large capital combinations favor a policy somewhat different from this. They favor a policy of rather trying to arrive at a temporary settlement of their "differences" with Japan at the expense of the Soviet Union. Can there be any doubt that if Japan would really place the U.S. before an accomplished fact, that is, a war against the Soviet Union, that these tendencies would become strengthened, and that a serious danger would arise of these tendencies becoming predominant in the American bourgeoisie? It is for these reasons that the struggle against war preparations and for the defense of the Soviet Union must be developed much more widely and intensively than ever before. The anti-Soviet incitements of the capitalist press, assisted by the reformists, upon the execution of Kirov's murderers, should serve to us as a signal to intensify the mobilization of the masses for the defense—*daily defense*—of the Soviet Union.

In this connection, we have in our agitation sometimes two typically wrong approaches. In some instances, we correctly try to arouse the masses against Japanese imperialism, but this is done in such a way as not to bring out properly the role of American imperialism, with the result that we have in our agitation a one-sided approach. On the other hand, we have examples of agitation in which we do attempt to show the position of U.S. imperialism in connection with the war danger and try to arouse the masses against the war preparations, etc., but almost completely leave out the special role of Japanese imperialism at the present time.

It is manifest that both these methods of agitation are not correct. From our political line it follows that the chief war incendiary is at present Japanese imperialism in the Far East, as German Fas-

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cism is in Europe, and that the struggle against Japanese imperialism and German Fascism is a basic and organic part of our agitation against war and for the defense of the Soviet Union. At the same time, we must at no time be guilty of leaving out the role of American imperialism. American imperialist policy is based upon an orientation which seeks to bring about a war of Japan against the Soviet Union in order to weaken both; and that in case Japan should succeed in placing American imperialism before the fact of an anti-Soviet war, there is the greatest danger that the predominant tendency within the American bourgeoisie will become that of the monopolist groups which even today tend toward a policy of settling the differences with Japan at the expense of the Soviet Union. By carrying on agitation along these lines, we will link up our struggle for the defense of the Soviet Union, organically, with the struggle against our main enemy, the American bourgeoisie itself. A radical improvement of our work of political education of the armed forces of American imperialism is a basic phase of our anti-war struggle.

On the question of the defense of the Soviet Union it is necessary to take up this angle: *what importance do we attach to the struggle against Trotzkyism in our fight against war and for the defense of the Soviet Union?* I have very little to add to what has already been said at this plenum by Comrade Browder, Comrade Edwards and others. I want to deal mainly with the agitational angle, and from the following point of view: have you examined the last program adopted by the merged counter-revolutionary party of the Trotzkyites and Musteites? The question of the Soviet Union you will find handled in two sections: it is handled in the section which deals with their attack on the Comintern and the C.P., and then it is handled under a special section entitled, defense of the Soviet Union. In the section entitled—defense of the Soviet Union—they expressed themselves "in favor" of defending the Soviet Union. Then they discussed this question in the other section dealing with the Comintern and the C.P., and what is the argument made there? That the Soviet Government is controlling the Comintern; that Stalin, through the Comintern, has "reduced" the C.P.'s of the capitalist countries to the miserable status of organizations fighting for the "*so-called defense of the Soviet Union.*"

I wish the comrades would get the full import of this counter-revolutionary Trotzkyite approach: that the struggle for the defense of the Soviet Union, which millions of workers and toilers throughout the world consider their most sacred duty to *themselves*, not alone to the workers in the Soviet Union; the struggle for the defense of the Soviet Union, which for every honest, class-conscious

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worker is the symbol of and inseparable from, the struggle for Socialism and Soviet Power in his own country—this, in the Trotzky program, becomes a "so-called defense of the Soviet Union".

It is obvious why these Trotzkyite scoundrels did not *dare* to leave out of their program at least some kind of gesture that they, too, are for the Soviet Union. They cannot very well do that and hope to be able to show their face in any sort of working class assembly, or any assembly of honest opponents of war. But the main purpose of the program of the new organization is to serve as the spearhead and vanguard of the bourgeois counter-revolution against the Soviet Union. This they have made clear when they said that our fight to defend the Soviet Union is a "so-called" defense. They mean, we should not defend the Soviet Union. What else? They are trying to construct a contradiction between the defense of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the defense of the interests of the American proletariat on the other hand. They are trying to say, under cover of revolutionary phrases, that when you fight for the defense of the Soviet Union, you are fighting against the interests of the American workers. Can there be a more clearly expressed counter-revolutionary theory? I don't know of any. It should be clear that we are not carrying on any sort of serious agitation against war and for the defense of the Soviet Union if we do not tear to shreds this counter-revolutionary theory, if we do not show up this counter-revolutionary gang for what they are—the scum of the earth, the worst enemies of the American masses. Thus, the struggle against Trotzkyism today must become an important part of our anti-war agitation and the agitation for the defense of the Soviet Union.

IX. TRADE UNION, LABOR PARTY, UNITED FRONT

I will now pass over to the agitational tasks confronting us in connection with *the three main policies of the Party in the present period; namely, the trade unions, the Labor Party, and the United Front.*

On the question of *trade union work*—what are our agitational tasks? I think the first thing to say on this question is that *we must carry on more agitation for trade union organization.* The same as on the question of the capitalist offensive—we seem to assume that we don't have to agitate the workers to fight for better wages, lower hours, that they know all of this—that all that is necessary is for us to expose the role of the reformists. So also on this question, I think we are not really developing a real systematic agitational campaign for organization into the trade unions. We assume that the workers—all workers—are already convinced of the need of

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trade unions. But this is not so. In my opinion we have got to understand that our Party, our Party members, must be agitators for trade unionism, of course, for class struggle trade unionism, for policies of class struggle in the trade unions, but for trade unionism. *I do not think, comrades, that we can make very great headway in strengthening the American proletariat against the capitalists and in fighting the reformists in the trade unions if we do not begin to stand forth as the champion organizers and agitators for trade union organization in the United States. That is point number one.*

Then in connection with this we have got to take to heart and toi make the proper conclusions from one particular sentence in the resolution of the Central Committee on this question. It says: "The tone used in the press [meaning our press] with regard to the A. F. of L. must be changed". In what way? "Criticizing the reactionary leaders of the A. F. of L. in a manner convincing for the rank and file but treating the A. F. of L. locals and unions as mass workers' organizations in which we are carrying on a struggle for winning the masses for the revolutionary struggle, drawing in all honest functionaries, fighting for our influence, for winning the trade union posts and being ready to take on ourselves responsibility for their work."

Now in connection with agitation there arises for us a couple of problems. One is to guard against treating the A. F. of L. locals and unions as fascist or semi-fascist or capitalist organizaions. We used to do that somewhat in the past. We cannot and should not do that now. It may be difficult to change habits and customs acquired through a period of years. But, comrades, we must learn and very rapidly, as we are already learning, to adopt a different tone, that is, in the sense of criticizing, treating the A. F. of L. locals and unions as workers' organizations of which we are a part, but in which we have different proposals, different ideas, different lines, that we fight for in the organization. This does not in the least mean, as you can easily see, that we cease criticizing the reactionaries or our opponents. Not in the least. But the methods and forms of criticism must be adapted to the present situation. We have got to criticize on the basis of concrete policies, concrete proposals, in a manner, as the resolution says, convincing to the workers. We must do it not as outsiders, but as part of the unions, fighting for a different policy than the reactionaries and trying to convince and win the workers for our class struggle policies as against the class collaboration reactionary policies. In other words, we must guard against the Right deviation as well as the "Left" deviation from the correct Party line.

On the question of the Labor Party. What specific agitational

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problems arise for us on this? In the Central Committee plenum we have been given the main line or the main contents of our agitation on this question. I will undertake to summarize and bring out the most outstanding points in the agitational work of our Party on the Labor Party.

First of all, why a Labor Party? When we agitate among the masses for a Labor Party we want to win the masses for this slogan. What should be the content of our agitation on this point? We have got to proceed on this question to show the masses that their recent experiences in the class struggle, strikes, etc., their recent experiences in the election campaign raise before them inevitably the question of whether or not it is correct to continue to support bourgeois parties as they did up till now and whether it was correct to accept the recommendation of the A. F. of L. leadership, to adopt the policy of "reward your friends and punish your enemies" in the capitalist parties—this is the key to our agitation. I speak, Comrades, of agitation, not propaganda, of how to reach the masses. We raise before them the question which is already agitating their minds. There is one thing you must understand, as the resolution states, that life itself is raising the question before our Party of what its attitude should be to a Labor Party. The election results have shown, as the Central Committee has already analyzed and explained to the Party, that there is on foot a large mass tendency to break away from the old bourgeois parties. We have seen it in every place where there was a "Left" opponent of Roosevelt—he secured a large number of votes—California, Minneapolis, and other places.

We also know that the experiences of the masses in their strikes during the last year and a half are forcing them to seek a way for independent political action. The Party resolution says that in as much as we cannot expect at the present time that these large masses, probably involving several million, will at once, immediately, pass over from Roosevelt, or from the Republican Party to the Communist Party support; and since the Communist Party cannot remain indifferent to these maturing break-away movements, to what form and shape they will take, the Party therefore adopts the policy of entering into these big movements with the view of helping the masses to break away from the old parties and from the reformists and directing them into the channels of class struggle on the political field. This is our approach to the question. But how to bring the issue to the masses is the second point and this is our main concern in this meeting and on this, as I have said, the basic approach is to raise before the masses the same questions which they themselves are today thinking about. Hundreds of thousands of American workers are today reviewing their experiences for the last year and

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a half on the economic field in the unions, in the shops, and also in the elections, trying to find a way of how they can engage in political action which would be beneficial to them and not to the capitalists. And if we come to the masses, proceeding from the same angle and raising the same questions as they themselves, perhaps confusedly and unclearly as yet, but nevertheless they think about, then we will find the correct agitational approach. Namely, by raising the question: was it beneficial to the working masses and toilers of the United States, to give their votes for Roosevelt in the presidential elections and in the last congressional elections? Was it correct and beneficial for the masses to follow the lead of William Green in adopting the non-partisan policy of the A. F. of L.? And by showing that it was incorrect, that it did not help the workers, it did not help them to get unemployment insurance, it did not help them to get higher wages, shorter hours or the right to organize or any of these things they have been fighting for, we will present to the masses most effectively not only the question as to why a Labor Party, but also what kind of a Labor Party. The Central Committee resolution says that we are not for every kind of a Labor Party, that we want to fight for a particular kind of a Labor Party. And what kind of a Labor Party is that?

Before I take up the agitational answer to this, I want to draw the attention of the comrades to that section of the resolution which discusses the probable developments in the United States. That is, what form and shape is the mass breakaway from the old Parties likely to take? The Central Committee resolution lists four possibilities: First is a sort of progressive third party, like the LaFollette movements, including of course a large number of workers, farmers, unions and petty-bourgeois elements. We are not for that. The second possible course of development is a party which calls itself farmer-labor, but which is essentially a third bourgeois party of the LaFollette type. The third possibility is of a party more radical, probably calling itself Labor Party, dominated by sections of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, perhaps in partnership with Socialist Party bureaucrats, excluding Communists and militant workers and carrying on a policy of class collaboration and collaboration with the New Deal. The fourth possibility is of a Labor Party based on unions, arising mainly from below with a program of demands of class struggle for the workers, led by militant workers, including Communists. The resolution also points out that we must not take this too dogmatically and the resolution points out that some of these may take place simultaneously. But we are urged to keep this line clear—that there is a fight between the class struggle policy

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and class collaboration policy and in this movement we must try to join hands in and rally all those who tend to class struggle.

This must not be put abstractly but in terms of mass demands for which a Labor Party will fight, a party that will fight for unemployment insurance, such as the Workers Bill, for the Farmers Relief Bill and demands, for Negro rights, against lynching, for democratic rights; *a Party that will not shrink from hurting capitalist profits in order to improve the immediate conditions of the masses.* We fight not just "for a Labor Party" but for a Labor Party of this character.

The third question which we must raise is the role of the Communist Party in such a movement. Are we going to carry on such agitation among the masses as to give the impression that the Communist Party is going out of business? Clearly not. The Central Committee resolution stresses that point in this way and says that just because life itself raises before us the question of the Labor Party and demands that we revise our attitude in favor of supporting such a movement, we must increase many-fold our agitation for the Communist Party's program, for the Party's policy, for our Party's tactics and its role in the class struggle movement as the only real independent proletarian Party that can lead the working class to victory and Soviet Power. No Labor Party can take the place of the Communist Party which we must build into a mass Party.

The speech of Comrade Browder in Washington gives us the agitational way in which we can show the masses why the Communist Party is willing to join with the non-Communist masses in the formation of a mass Labor Party with class struggle policies. I need not elaborate on it except to say: Read that speech again and see how plainly we bring to the masses why the Labor Party, what kind, and why the Communist Party supports it although it considers itself the only real independent proletariat party.

On the question of the united front. What agitational problems especially are confronting us on this question? I think the central points of agitation in connection with this can be reduced to two. One is the mass agitation for the united front must proceed, as it has up to now, but more widely and more effectively, *as a struggle for the unity of action of the workers, for their most immediate burning needs and demands.* The second point which the Central Committee resolution stresses is the method and manner of combatting social reformism. I have spoken of this already in connection with our trade union work. I want to deal now with the same question in connection with the Socialist Party. The key to an understanding of the correct methods of exposing, criticizing and com-

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batting social reformism is given in the resolution: (1) We must have a differentiated approach to the various groups and tendencies within the Socialist Party. While we carry on our programmatic criticism of the programs, policies, ideology of social reformism as something that paves the way for fascism, this must be done on the basis of the experiences in the struggle for the united front. Our criticism must be directed in a differentiated way. We cannot criticize Thomas *the same way* as we attack the right wing of the Socialist Party. It would not be convincing to criticize the Revolutionary Policy Committee *the same way* as we criticize Thomas. And certainly to the rank and file (the most decisive force), we cannot have the same attitude as to the Left or "Left" leaders on top. We must differentiate even between various elements of the Revolutionary Policy Committee and various elements of functionaries. The Central Committee resolution gives the most detailed agitational and propaganda content of our approach on the united front in dealing with the Socialist Party.

On the united front and the revolutionary way out. From the standpoint of agitation and propaganda this is primarily a problem of continually *deepening* the contents of our agitation, proceeding from the experiences of the masses in the united front struggles for partial demands to the need for the struggle for power, for a Soviet America. The Party line is to consider the united front as the main avenue, in the present period, through which we must undertake to lead the masses up to the struggle for the revolutionary way out under the leadership of the single proletarian party—the Communist Party. Our agitation and propaganda must aim to help accomplish this historic objective. This will be accomplished not by mechanically tagging on the slogan of Soviet Power to the slogans of partial demands but by widening the partial slogans themselves, raising them to higher levels, and deepening the revolutionary contents of our agitation and propaganda.

A powerful weapon for this purpose is mass propaganda of *what a Soviet government in the United States would mean for the working class and the toiling masses of this country*. This weapon we have not yet even begun to utilize. However, the PolBuro has decided to make a change by completing a program of how to overcome this very great deficiency. We like to call it a big plan. We do not think it is too ambitious. Steps have already been taken to realize it. A decision for two series of pamphlets has been made, one to deal with opponent and enemy movements, tendencies, etc., the other to deal with the revolutionary way out. The first series of pamphlets will include pamphlets on Trotskyism, Coughlin, Huey Long, Sinclair, F.L.P., etc.

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Then there is another series of pamphlets on the revolutionary way out. I need not list all of the items. The first one is a general pamphlet: *What Will a Soviet Government in the United States Accomplish for the Toiling Masses.* Next is a group of pamphlets dealing with industries, that is, what would a Soviet Government do for steel workers, miners, marine workers, railroad, textile, automobile, agriculture, taking the most important industries and building up a pamphlet for each to show concretely what a Soviet Government would do and what it would mean for the workers in these industries.

Then a series dealing with the allies of the proletariat—the farmers, the Negroes, the middle classes. A pamphlet each for the toiling women and youth. Then a series of pamphlets dealing with certain phases of social life. This will include: Democracy in a Soviet America, culture, the peace policies and national policies of a Soviet Government, etc.

We expect that with this series of pamphlets the Party will be better equipped to fight for the winning the masses to the struggle for the revolutionary way out, for a Soviet America.

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The Organizational Tasks Arising from the Plenum Decisions

By F. BROWN

THE resolution of the Central Committee Plenum, after having characterized the changes that have taken place in the recent period, states the main tasks for our Party as follows:

> "All this in its entirety very strongly emphasizes the necessity of **organizationally and politically strengthening the Party in every possible way, of overcoming the weaknesses of its work, of recruiting new workers into its ranks, overcoming the excessive fluctuation, of increasing and improving the Party press, of developing a wide propaganda of the tactics and program of the Party, of strengthening of its independent leading role in all the struggles of the working class and all the toilers of the U.S.A.**
>
> **"With these aims in view, the Party must verify its work and lay down its tasks on three most important questions—the trade union question, the united front, and the question of the possible formation of a mass Labor Party."**

In line with the resolution, the Plenum not only reviewed to what extent the organizational tasks laid down by the Eighth Party Convention have been carried out, but at the same time determined also the organizational tasks that flow out of the line and decisions of the Plenum.

The Plenum registered general organizational improvement and quantitative and qualitative strengthening of our Party, through a better understanding of how to connect itself with the masses in the factories, and in the trade unions. This improvement manifested itself in the broadening of the united front movement as evidenced in the Chicago Congress Against War and Fascism and the Washington Congress for Social and Unemployment Insurance; in the gains made in the textile fields in connection with the great strike; in the progress made in the A. F. of L.

Yet, the Plenum put forward these questions: To what extent has the Party as a whole connected all of its activities with the building of the Party? To what extent have we utilized the broadened united front movement, the building of the opposition in the A. F. of L. unions, etc, to recruit the best elements into our ranks, to increase the *Daily Worker* circulation, what progress have we made in transferring the organizational base of the Party from residential neighborhoods into the shops and factories?

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In answering these questions, the good experiences and also the organizational weaknesses came clearly to the surface.

The main organizational decisions of the Eighth Party Convention were: (1) To bring the Party membership up to 40,000 (in good standing) by January 21, the anniversary of Lenin's death; (2) to strengthen the existing shop nuclei and to double their number; (3) to improve the life of the units by developing the Unit Bureaus, and by introducing the group system; (4) to systematically and intensively train new cadres through the National and District Training Schools,—more educational activities in the lower units, etc.; (5) to systematically issue more and more Communist literature and improve the distributing apparatus; (6) to bring the circulation of the *Daily Worker* up to 60,000 by increasing the number of subscribers and the daily sale in front of factories, on the streets, neighborhoods, trade unions, etc.; (7) to make of every eligible Party member a member of a trade union; at the same time to build up our fractions and make them the driving force inside the unions in their struggles against the exploiters, as well as the driving force in building the opposition in the A. F. of L.; (8) to make our Party more conscious of its task in giving guidance to and building the Young Communist League; establishing a League nucleus alongside of every Party shop nucleus; assigning forces to the League and mobilizing the Party for mass recruiting into the League.

Let us examine how these tasks were fulfilled:

RECRUITING

The end of the Recruiting Drive on January 21, found the Party far from having fulfilled this important control task. We cannot speak of a real drive. The figures for the months of the drive, with the exception of December, show that the Party was not mobilized along the line of the C.C. letter addressed to every Party member. The keynote of this letter was close personal contact of the individual Party members with their fellow-workers in the shops, in the trade unions, in the mass organizations—concentration upon individual workers. It was only in December that the drive began to show some results. This fact alone has clearly demonstrated to what extent the Party members are detached from their fellow-workers, and how it took time to orientate the whole Party in the correct direction.

The Recruiting Drive also shows clearly that there is a difference in the recruiting effectiveness of the various districts. In the organizational report this was expressed in the following figures. Comparing the number of recruits with the size of the membership, the

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recruiting capacity of New York was 30 per cent; Pittsburgh, 22 per cent; Cleveland, 30 per cent; Detroit, 32 per cent; Philadelphia, 28 per cent; California, 20 per cent; Chicago, 18 per cent. These percentages indicate to what extent the districts have improved the quality of the recruiting, the educational activities in the units, the system of recruiting and retaining the new members; how to get them quickly assigned to units, etc. The improvement in the recruiting capacity and power of retaining the new members in New York, for example, is explained by the fact that the Party in New York has improved its educational activities, not only in the units, but also in the form of lectures, forums, mass meetings, which to a certain extent compensates for the still weak educational activities in the units. The improvement for example, in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, is to be explained also along this line. The conclusion to be drawn is that the improvement of the recruiting capacity of the Party depends not only upon the extent to which the Party is active in leading and developing mass struggles, but also the extent to which we are improving the educational activities of the Party, and on a better understanding of the necessity of more extended, more intensive recruiting, not only numerically, but also qualitatively, as a daily task of the Party.

It is true that the continuous attacks by the enemies make the mass activities of the Party more difficult. In many of the districts, especially in the South and the West, and also in some of the concentration districts, the terror, in the form of discrimination and victimization in the factories, makes recruiting more difficult. But on the other hand, the changing attitude of the workers, of the masses, their disillusionment with the N.R.A., makes them look for a way out, makes them eager to listen to our arguments, and more receptive to the program and policies of the Party.

This means that intensive recruitment is possible. But to improve this and to improve the ability of the Party to keep new members, it is necessary to strengthen the consciousness and determination of the Party members in this task. Furthermore, to be able to win over larger and larger masses it is not enough to improve our press as a means for convincing the workers of the correctness of our position. We must at the same time strive to make each individual Party member a convincing agitator and organizer. In other words, we have to improve the educational activity of the Party and to strengthen the connections of each individual Party member with his fellow workers in the shops and mass organizations.

The discussion showed that with a correct orientation, as was shown especially in the month of December, we were able, if not to double the recruiting, to improve the quality of the recruits. In

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comparison with the month previous to the Recruiting Drive, the recruiting in auto, textile and shoe was tripled. Good improvement has also been made in transport, needle, and a slight improvement noted in steel. These facts show clearly, not only the necessity for carrying on recruiting as a daily task along the line of the C.C. letter to the individual Party members, but also the necessity for concentrating especially in the basic industries, particularly in view of the coming Spring struggles. The preparedness of the Party for the coming Spring struggles depends primarily on our ability to strengthen our position in the basic industries, and in the trade unions, in the A. F. of L. unions in these industries.

The drive officially closed with the Lenin Memorial meetings. In line, however, with the Plenum decision, recruiting has to be intensified. This means that all districts will have to continue to conduct their own drives, concentrating especially in the basic industries and in the A. F. of L. unions. The recruiting tempo reached in the month of December must be kept up.

SHOP NUCLEI

How do we stand with the shop nuclei? To what extent have we built new ones, and strengthened the old? How do the shop nuclei function today? Are all the shop nuclei issuing their own shop papers? To what extent are the shop nuclei developing initiative, establishing themselves as the Party in the particular shops, mills, mines, factories, etc?

In answering these questions, the discussion showed that progress has been made in practically all the districts, but also in this respect, not in the same proportion. Headway has been made in Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, and especially in New York. But Chicago, Pittsburgh and other districts are moving slowly.

The example of the New York district, where from the time of the Eighth Party Convention the number of shop nuclei has more than doubled, shows the possibility of a real turn in transferring the center of gravity of our Party organizations into the shops. Section 2 of the New York District has today 66 shop and building nuclei, comprising 600 members, as against six street units, with 250 members. More than that, each shop nucleus is making real efforts to issue a shop paper. How do we explain these results in the New York District? By the fact that for months the New York District not only conducted a campaign of enlightenment on the necessity of building shop nuclei, thereby orientating also the street units to becoming instruments for building shop nuclei, penetrating the shops, etc.; but because the New York District also took organizational measures to bring about such a change, by the assignment of leading

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comrades to the existing shop nuclei, by improving the section apparatus to secure better guidance for the shop nuclei, etc. The New York District not only improved to some extent the educational activities of the units, but has also taken steps for training new cadres. It has established the *Party Builder*, which discusses organizational problems, and popularizes the best experiences. Not only has the district established such an organ, but the sections have started to issue their own Org. Bulletins.

The experiences in New York show also that one of our major instruments for the improvement of the organizational methods of the Party, for the improvement of the apparatus, is the *Party Organizer*, and the "Party Life" column in the *Daily Worker*. In this respect, the Plenum discussion brought forward how the districts from now on, besides having their own district Party organs, must utilize to a greater extent the *Party Organizer*, and the "Party Life" column, to deal with the most important organizational problems, exchange experiences, especially on the life of the shop nuclei, thereby making of these columns such instruments that will guide the Party in the day to day organizational activities.

Improving the shop papers, increasing the number of shop and neighborhood papers, is of vital importance. It is through the shop and neighborhood papers that the units speak to the masses among whom they are active. A larger number of shop papers means not only closer connection with the masses, instruments for guiding the masses in their daily struggles, for recruiting the best elements, but also better preparation for the Party to remain connected with the masses through the shop and neighborhood press in case of the suppression of the legal press. The day that each unit issues its own paper, shop or neighborhood, we will have at our disposal hundreds of papers that will bring the slogans and the program of the Party, connected with local demands, to hundreds of thousands of workers. To solve these problems, one of the main tasks is to further improve the life of the units.

LIFE OF THE UNITS

To improve the life of the units, we must improve primarily the functioning of the Unit Bureaus, develop the Unit Bureaus to the point where they become real leaders of the unit. We must also extend the Group System. The Plenum discussion proved that it is precisely in those districts where attention has been paid to the development of the Section and Unit Bureaus, where the life of the units has been improved by more educational activities and especially where the Group System has been introduced, which permits more educational activity in the units, that we have the best results. In

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those districts where the Group System is functioning, the Party is able to secure better attendance, more regular dues-payment, quick distribution of propaganda and agitational material, and also quick mobilization of the Party. For example, Section 1 of District 2 was able in 24 hours to mibilize 400 Party members for a demonstration by mobilizing the captains, who, in turn, mobilized the members of their respective groups.

There is still misunderstanding and confusion as to what the Group System should be. There are comrades who see in the Group System the possibility of a mechanical multiplication of the units. There are other comrades who would like to overburden the Group System with all sorts of tasks. There are others who see in the system only a preparation for illegality. The experiences prove, however, that we must insist that the main and fundamental task of the Group System shall remain, insuring better attendance, more regular dues payment, and quick mobilization of the Party for mass distribution of propaganda material, the instrument for quick mobilization of the membership. These were the reasons that caused us to build such a system, and not the building of a new form of organization in case of illegality. It goes without saying, however, that such a system, while improving the activities of the Party, is at the same time a splendid training for the functioning of the Party in case it should be forced into illegality. The examples of how the Party is functioning in the South, in California, under the continuous pressure of the growing terror, are of tremendous value for the Party as a whole. These experiences, enriched by the international experiences, must steel the Party to better withstand all attacks.

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The problem of training new cadres, the problem of literature, which are part and parcel of the organizational problem of how to improve the Party organization; how to make the Party better able to connect itself with larger and larger masses, were considered specifically by the Agitprop Conference. These questions are dealt with in the March *Party Organizer*.

"DAILY WORKER" CIRCULATION

In examining the status of the *Daily Worker* circulation, the Plenum concluded that the main task to be solved in order to secure a larger circulation of the *Daily Worker*, as one of the main prerequisites for building the Party, for reaching new masses, is of an *organizational character*. The circulation of the *Daily Worker* is not growing because of the lack of an effective apparatus of

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distribution, failure to mobilize the Party in the Circulation Drive, and failure to utilize the organizations around the Party.

In this regard, too, every district must emulate New York, where, through the building of the Red Builders, we were able to increase the circulation of our central organ. As the circulation stands now, it is clear that only a part of the membership reads the *Daily*, that we reach a very small number of the workers in the organizations under the influence of the Party, that we do not reach the masses organized in the A. F. of L. oppositions, to say nothing of the masses we want to penetrate. In this respect, the Plenum put the question very sharply: If we believe as we do, that the central organ of the Party is the instrument through which we must guide the Party membership in their day by day activities, that it is the instrument through which we must reach and influence the largest masses, then we must able to build its circulation. In this respect, we have to solve the organizational problem of how to improve the distribution apparatus of the *Daily Worker*.

The decision of the Plenum is to raise the circulation of the *Daily Worker* to 100,000 by July 1, 1935. It can be done; it must be done! In each city of the United States, there is the possibility of building groups of Red Builders, especially in the concentration districts, in the nearby districts reached by the *Daily Worker* on the date of issue. But the Red Builders alone will not solve the problem if the units of the Party are not mobilized, if they do not organize their Red Builder brigades; if we do not organize *Daily Worker* committees in the trade unions and mass organizations, and if the District and Section Committees of the Party do not take responsibility for the carrying out of this task, by checking up on the decisions day by day. Here, again, we must emphasize the necessity of utilizing the *Party Organizer* and the "Party Life" column as a means of giving organizational guidance and for bringing forward the best experience in this campaign, that must be launched immediately.

TRADE UNIONS

In reviewing to what extent the Party has fulfilled the control task in regard to the trade unions, the Plenum brought forward the best results, the best experiences. In practically all districts, the number of Party members active in the trade union field, and especially in the A. F. of L. unions, has increased. This was shown especially by the results of the work inside the A. F. of L., in the A.A. in Pennsylvania and Ohio, in the U.M.W.A. in Western Pennsylvania, in the textile territories, in the increasing number of Party members and Left-Wing workers elected by their trade union

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locals as delegates to the city central bodies of the trade unions in a number of cities.

In regard to the building of fractions and the functioning of the fractions inside the trade unions, the discussion also brought forward very good experiences as evidence that the Party members are getting a better understanding of fraction work, of its importance. However, the task set by the Eighth Party Convention that all eligible Party members become active in the trade unions, of building the fractions, has not been fulfilled to the fullest extent. In line with the Plenum decisions, calling for the strengthening of our position in the trade unions, in line with the decision on the Labor Party, which calls for the Left-Wing forces, especially in the trade unions, to become the steering wheels that will correctly orientate the desire of the masses (coming from below) for a Labor Party, we must conduct a real drive to accomplish the task set by the Eighth Party Convention and by the last Plenum.

The fractions as a whole are still functioning very poorly, and in many instances, are not clear on their role. Instead of being the driving force in the unions, many of the fractions are still lagging at the tail-end of the organized masses. This means that, in the process of building the fractions, we must clarify the membership on their role and tasks. The building of the fractions must go hand in hand with continuous education. The task confronting the Party in trade union work, which has developed to such an extent, makes it imperative for the districts and sections to build Trade Union Commissions. More than that, even in the units where these constitute the Party, as in small towns, or in important industrial territories of the large cities, we must have trade union directors. The Trade Union Commission must be the instrument of the district committees, or of the section committees in guiding the trade union work, in building, and educating the fractions, developing cadres, etc.

The good examples of the progress made in New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Chicago, where such commissions have already been established, must be emulated by all districts and sections. To make real progress in this sphere of activity, to more closely connect the Party with the organized masses and take leadership in the daily struggles, we must learn from the experiences of the last period, improve our methods of work, make the Party more and more conscious of trade union work, by continuous discussion and enlightenment on this vital problem, and by giving continuous guidance to the fractions.

THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

In checking up on the control task of the Party Convention

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regarding the Y.C.L., the Plenum found that, with the exception of New York, there has been very little effort made to fulfil the task laid down. Only New York is an example to all the districts for having fulfilled the task of making the Party more conscious of youth work, of giving the Y.C.L. some attention and guidance, of assigning young Party forces to the Y.C.L. for the purpose of strengthening its cadres, to aid the Y.C.L. in becoming a mass organization by carrying on increasing and systematic recruiting of young workers. The New York District, immediately following the Party Convention, not only assigned a good number of young Party members to strengthen the Y.C.L., but threw all of its forces into making the National Youth Day demonstration of last year the largest ever held in New York. In this demonstration, the young workers saw in the thousands of Party members and adult workers participating in that demonstration, not only the solidarity of the adult workers, but saw concretely the effect of the aid given by the Party. From this moment on, in New York, the Y.C.L. registered a steady growth. From an organization of 1,100 members at the beginning of last year, it grew to over 3,000 at the time of the last plenum, almost tripling its membership.

But, even in New York, the Party did not help sufficiently in building Y.C.L. nuclei where Party nuclei exist. In most of the districts, the adult comrades, busy with numerous tasks, do not sufficiently realize that the strengthening of the Y.C.L. means strengthening the Party; that it is from the American-born, from the American young workers, principally, that the Party will get new, sound forces—the cadres that are needed for the building of the Party to a mass Party. But the Party will gain forces from the Y.C.L. only if we strengthen the cadres of the Y.C.L., helping to build it into a mass organization. The Y.C.L. set before itself the task of securing a membership of 12,000 by July 1st. This figure must be reached. But the Y.C.L. needs the full assistance of the Party, especially in the concentration districts, and in those districts where the gap between the size of the Party and the Y.C.L. is great.

The Plenum decisions in regard to the Y.C.L. are as follows: (1) to give full assistance to the Y.C.L., to build it to a real mass organization; (2) to undertake in the period from now until July the building of at least 50 shop nuclei of the Y.C.L. Every district must select the factories to concentrate upon. This means assignment of forces, continuous follow-up, etc.; (3) as part of the *Daily Worker* circulation drive, the Party units must spread the *Young Worker* among the youth in the shops, unions, mass organizations. The *Young Worker* must become the best means of reaching young workers, the best means of recruiting for the Y.C.L.; (4) the lead-

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ing cadres must be strengthened in all districts. This means assigning young Party members for youth work. The example of New York, which has already assigned 100 young Party members for League work must be followed by all other districts; (5) there must be more attention and guidance to the Y.C.L. In connection with the broad movement around the American Youth Congress, the Y.C.L. is learning to connect itself with broad masses of youth; (6) leadership and guidance to the Y.C.L. must take the form of assistance in developing youth activities in connection with all the mass campaigns of the Party. No Party plan can be considered complete unless it indicates how the youth are to be mobilized for specific campaigns, and how the Party will aid the work of the youth in these campaigns.

The example of the Harlem Section which is taking serious steps to intensify youth work must be followed by all sections, by all units of the Party.

NEGRO WORK

A political organizational problem of vital importance that came up in the Plenum discussion was the necessity of making a turn in our Negro work, learning from the experiences in the trade union work, in order better to connect the Party with the organized Negro masses. The Plenum noted that while the influence of the Party is increasing among the Negro masses, they are still, organizationally, detached from us. The political-organizational problem to be solved is how to penetrate the large organizations of the Negro people, the fraternal organizations, churches, etc. We must not be content with the united front established at the top. The past united front conferences had a tremendous repercussion all over the country. But they did not bring the expected organizational results, for the simple reason that in the branches of those organizations there were no forces to take up the decisions of the united front conferences, to fight for these decisions, and mobilize the masses around these decisions. To mobilize the organized Negro masses, we must be among them, inside their organizations. For this reason, the units, which include Negro workers, especially those units where the percentage of Negro members is high, must see to it that the Party members join or rejoin the Negro organizations. We must break with the situation where Negro workers, upon joining the Party, leave their mass organizations, thus separating themselves from their fellow-workers with whom they had had contact. Yes, our task is to increase recruitment of Negro workers, but not to take them out of the mass organizations. On the contrary, to build the Party in these organizations, we must see to it that the Party members go back to

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their old organizations. This will mean that the street units with Negro residential sections in their territory, will work in the neighborhoods, and at the same time carry on work through Party fractions inside these organizations, which have their headquarters in the same neighborhood. Along this line, we will maintain better connections with large Negro masses, and our forces in the Negro organizations will become, not only the driving force for drawing the Negro mass organizations into the struggle for Negro rights, in the daily struggles of the masses, but at the same time, the driving force for bringing these organizations into a powerful League of Struggle for Negro rights on the basis of affiliation. The problem can be solved by going into these Negro organizations, working among these masses from within.

TIGHTENING THE PARTY APPARATUS

Great emphasis was laid on the problem of tightening up the whole Party apparatus. On the extent that the Party connects itself more firmly with the masses, and that large masses are put in motion under the leadership of the Party, depends our resistance to the attack of the enemy. Especially today, under the growing attack against the Party by the Government, Chambers of Commerce, the Hearst press, the Dickstein Committee, which are phases of the general plan of attack for the suppression of our Party, phases of the general attack against the working class, as can be seen in the recent attack of the government against the A. F. of L. unions, it is imperative that the Party take steps to improve the life of the shop nuclei, and fractions, to improve the Group System, the functioning of the leading forces, to build a whole network of shop and neighborhood papers; in short to make every step for the improvement of the whole Party organization. There must be closer connection between Organization and Agitprop work, in line with the two phases of the task already emphasized—improving the Party, politically and organizationally and of enhancing the ability of the Party to win and organize the masses. The forces of reaction are working at full speed to strike new blows against the working class in their scheme of war preparations, especially for attack against the Soviet Union. We must learn to be practical; we must take all those measures that can better adjust our apparatus to the daily needs of the Party. We must learn how best to utilize all of our activities, the various campaigns, to build the Party. While in the various campaigns we aim at particular objectives, we must see in the campaigns means to draw in larger and larger masses into struggle, by uniting these masses into a powerful united front movement. Through their experiences in these campaigns, in the daily struggles,

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the masses will learn that the Communist Party is their Party, and in learning this, the best elements will swell our ranks.

Building the Party to a mass Party means reaching larger masses, means strengthening the Party position in the A. F. of L. unions and other mass organizations, means developing, strengthening our struggle against the capitalist offensive, against War and Fascism, in defense of the Soviet Union; means better preparation to withstand all attacks.

To achieve this, we must also learn to fulfil the tasks by continuous check-up.

The organizational results and experiences registered by the Plenum have shown that the correct line of the Party has been followed, and also the means of solving concretely the organizational tasks flowing out of this line. The good experiences, the results brought forward by the Plenum must be a stimulus for further increasing the tempo in perfecting the building of the Party.

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Long Island Section Makes the Turn to Shop Work

(*Report to An Enlarged Session of the Section Committee, Section* 10, *District* 2, *December*, 1934.)

By BILL LAWRENCE

I AM of the opinion that the whole discussion on the report, the whole orientation of the Party, must be entered around the directives of the Open Letter—the building and entrenching of our Party in the important factories. Before I speak of our accomplishments and weaknesses, I would like to deal very briefly with the industries in our Section.

In the main concentration of our Section, we shall call it the A—— industry, the basic section of the workers are unorganized. Recently, these workers received a 10 per cent wage cut. The Negro workers work under extremely bad conditions and quite frequently one can hear among them talk of quitting the A—— industry altogether and of looking for a "decent" wage somewhere else. In the past few months our Party has reacted to these conditions and succeeded in creating a very good sentiment for organizations. With a little work done among the A—— workers, we have met with very good results and have established some partial organization for the workers.

Another important industry in our Section is the textile industry, in which most of the workers are unorganized. Those organized in the A. F. of L. have some bitter experiences with the leadership. During the recent general strike, the workers of the X—— mill refused to respond to the call of the union, not because they were not willing to fight, but, as they put it, because they did not trust the A. F. of L. leadership. This, of course, is no justification for not striking. It does indicate, however, the growing disillusionment in the ranks of the workers with the leadership of the A. F. of L. After the general strike, there was a general drive in the X—— mill against the workers' standard of living, and already we receive reports that the same workers who did not want to respond to the A. F. of L. call, now talk in terms of organization under a rank-and-file leadership. This is an indication of the possibilities our Party has among the textile workers, the possibilities of carrying on work within the A. F. of L. for rank-and-file leadership.

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In the metal industry in our Section the revolutionary union controls a few small shops; but the largest and most important metal shops are either controlled by the A. F. of L. or totally unorganized. Here, in the metal industry, particularly, we find terror being used by the employers to prevent the workers from organizing.

In G—— factory, another important metal shop and a point of concentration for our Section, the workers were recently sent back by the A. F. of L. without winning a single demand. During the strike we carried on a little work among the strikers and the response was pretty good; but unfortunately we have not succeeded so far in taking advantage of the dissatisfaction with the A. F. of L. to build a group, let alone a Party unit.

We also have in our Section numerous chemical factories with thousands of workers which are completely unorganized and which have not been touched by our Party yet.

We have several large food factories. We have the shoe industry with thousands of workers organized in the Boot and Shoe Union. The dissatisfaction with the official A. F. of L. leadership reaches such proportions that in some cases the workers do not care to talk to the representatives of the Boot and Shoe Union and ask our comrades why the United doesn't do some thing about it.

In the light of such possibilities, the question must therefore arise, how does our Section leadership face these tasks? Is our Party leadership in the Section able to meet these objective possibilities? The first prerequisite is a good, collective, alert leadership.

Since our last Convention we can note an improvement, organizationally, and politically, as well as in composition in our Section leadership. Out of fifteen comrades on the Section Committee, twelve are native-born. Of these, three are Negro comrades; seven are proletarians working in factories; five are white-collar workers; two are unemployed; and two are professional revolutionaries. This composition, on the whole I consider good.

We have a collective leadership in our Section, not only in the sense of collective planning and collective decisions, but also with regard to the execution of decisions. No decision, political or otherwise, is made outside of the Section Committee or Section Bureau.

Does the leadership of the Section understand its tasks? To answer this question, Comrades, we must see how the Section Committee met these tasks. At least three-fourths of the time was taken away with orientating the Party in our Section toward the factories.

At the time of the Convention we had in our Section the following shop nuclei: We had a nucleus in the M—— shop. Because this nucleus was composed of workers who had been fired from the shop after a lost strike, it was necessary eventually to

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dissolve it. We had another unit in G—— factory. This was a nucleus acting as a Communist unit should act, building the Party in the shop and reacting to the workers' problems in the factory.

We had a unit in the P—— Company. This unit, of poor composition, at no time gave leadership to the workers in the shop and it was anything but a Communist unit.

In the A—— industry, our Party had numerous contacts. There was a tremendous sentiment in the shops for the Party, but somehow we were not able to give this sentiment organizational expression. There is no doubt that very fine and valuable work was done in the shops, but very little organization as a result.

Since the Convention, we have built two shop nuclei in the A—— industry (this does not include another unit in Jamaica). Since the Convention, we have also organized four new shop nuclei in metal shops, and two others are in the process of being born. We have organized a shop nucleus in Z——, which is an important factory, also a shop nucleus in M—— shop, and a new shop unit in S——, with a better composition than in the past. As compared with 1,100 workers in factories among whom our Party operated at the time of our convention, today our shop nuclei work among 6,000 workers. Of these 6,000 workers about 1,900 are organized in the A. F. of L., 100 to 150 in T.U.U.L. unions, the rest of the workers are unorganized. Here and there we have shop groups, but none too strong to speak of.

We must first of all state that where our shop nuclei did react to conditions, we found that the influence of the Party grew, that the organization was strengthened, that we had among the comrades a feeling of optimism. In the units where the comrades failed to place themselves in the leadership, failed to see the struggle in the shops, failed to react to conditions, their nucleus became stagnant.

Take, for instance, the A—— units, the main concentration of our Section. Here we can say that, with the exception of early concentration where the *Daily Worker* was the only means of contact, the Party was built because we were able to link up the final aims of the Party with the immediate problems and struggles of the workers. The Party established itself in the A—— not only as the fighter for the final emancipation of the working class, but also because the workers in the A—— saw in the Party that fighter which was willing and ready to react to their grievances and win partial concessions from the company.

We have built the Party in the A—— by developing partial struggles, by putting forward simple and popular demands. You all remember the case of the worker who was fired; the Party immediately reacted. The worker was reinstated as a result of our

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work, with practically no organization existing in the A——, this achievement was of tremendous importance, because it raised the prestige of the Party in the eyes of the A——— workers.

In the S—— shop, although the unit itself is not very strong, we find that there is not one single issue in the shop which was or is of immediate concern to the S—— workers, to which our Party did not or does not react.

Another example where the Party carried on work in the shop, reacted to problems of the workers, and established itself as the leader of those workers was the G—— unit. In the G—— factory, precisely because of the activities of our unit, the workers began to realize the importance of organization. The employer, fearing the revolutionary union in the industry, tried to force the A. F. of L. into the shop. The workers refused to accept the A. F. of L. and went out on strike. Our unit was in the leadership of the strike. Non-Party workers quite frequently consulted the Section Organizer. At no time did our unit in G—— fail to bring out the Party's position on the N.R.A., economic struggles in general, or other questions during the strike period. It is true, the strike was lost, and while we, no doubt, exposed certain weaknesses during the strike, such as the failure to introduce economic demands at the very outset of the strike, failure to mobilize workers from other United shops in solidarity with the strikers, failure to bring the role of the Boot and Shoe in the G—— shop to the masses in the Boot and Shoe Union, the strike was lost for reasons beyond our control. The strikers were confronted with the combined forces of the employer, and the A. F. of L. leadership in the Boot and Shoe which openly sent up and protected scabs during the strike. The *Jewish Daily Forward* came out openly in declaring that there was no strike in G——, and thus allied itself with the strike-breaking agencies.

At no time did the workers in any way, even after the strike, lose any respect or blame the Party. During the strike our Party grew organizationally as well as ideologically.

The question arises, how was it possible for some of our shop nuclei to react to the problems of the workers, to win concessions from the employers, to establish themselves as the leaders of the workers in a given factory? They succeeded in doing so by applying elementary principles of Leninist Party organization: (1) By keeping in close contact with the workers in the shop. (2) By being alert to the problems of the workers, and not only reacting, but also giving leadership to the workers and helping them solve their problems. (3) By keeping in close contact with the Party organization and reporting on the events within the shop to the Party. (4) By the Party as a whole, taking advantage of those issues to establish

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itself as the leader of those struggles and at the same time build the Party organizationally.

Let us, for a moment, look at the other side of the story. Let us take a shop unit which did not react to problems. Take Unit 1-S where we have the opposite picture. In the last few months, the comrades have not reacted to one single issue. The comrades have not recruited one single member for the Party. They have not built a group in the A. F. of L. They have developed the theory that all the workers in the shop, or at least the greatest majority, are scabs and therefore no work can be done among these workers—and they have done nothing. What were the results? First, the unit became stagnant. It developed the theory that the unit members could do better work in their residential clubs than in the factory in which they work, and they very sharply questioned the correctness of the Party's form of organization. Such opinions, Comrades, are not accidental, but rather flow from: (1) Lack of political understanding of the importance of building the Party in the shops. (2) Lack of faith in the ability of the masses to fight for better conditions even after a defeated strike. (3) Adopting a defeatist attitude and conceding to the terror of the combined forces of the employer and bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. (4) Being led by the opinions of the most backward workers instead of giving leadership. (5) Overestimating the terror of the employer and influence of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy.

The second question: What was the role of the shop nuclei in building the economic organization of the workers?

Our Party units can point to economic organizations which were built as a result of their activities. In some cases, economic organizations in the form of independent unions. While it is true that some of these independent economic organizations do not as yet exercise shop control, or as yet are not in a position to determine the economic conditions of the workers, nevertheless, the very fact that economic organizations were built through Party units, definitely refutes the theory that our Party cannot build economic organizations, that it is the job of the Party to bring only the political campaigns to the workers and that it is only the task of the trade unions to build unions in the shop.

In the S—— factory we were able to recruit some 150 workers for the Industrial union. Then due to certain weaknesses and mistakes on our part, due to mistakes committed on the part of both the leaders of the Industrial union and ourselves, the union later did not grow as rapidly as in the early stages. After we recruited some 150 for the union, there, too, the A. F. of L., which at no time concerned itself with C——, stepped into the situation. Following the correct Party policy to shift the center of gravity in our trade

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union work into the A. F. of L., we urged the workers who had joined the industrial union, to enter the A. F. of L. union, but maintain rank and file control.

In our first Three Month Plan we made G——, an important metal factory, a point of concentration; this factory was unorganized. Some months ago the workers of that factory lost a strike. The first three weeks of concentration on factory G—— brought good results. We recruited some workers for the Party and built a group in the shop. As soon as the A. F. of L. learned that we were carrying on organization work in that shop, they, with the help of the S.P. stepped into the stiuation and began a campaign for organization. We immediately advised the workers to organize into the A. F. of L. but maintain rank and file control. A few weeks later the workers of this factory under the leadership of the A. F. of L. went out on strike. During the strike the leadership did everything to discourage the G—— workers from militant struggle, and after a few weeks they sent those workers back to work without winning a single demand for them. The A. F. of L. remained in the shop. Our immediate task here is to continue concentration, the building of a strong rank-and-file group in the shop.

In the G—— shoe factory, we have a similar situation. Our unit took the initiative to build a trade union. There was good response from the workers for the United. The employer called in the A. F. of L. Boot and Shoe, and through terror forced the workers to sign up. The workers resented this and went out on strike. We have already analyzed some of our weaknesses in this strike. The A. F. of L. is in the shop at the present time. There can be no question that if it were not for our unit, the workers would still be unorganized in G——. Our task at the present time is to build a rank and file group, strong enough to control the situation so that the economic organization of the workers in the shop is utilized to improve the material conditions of the G—— workers.

A word on our task in connection with some of the unions which I have enumerated. First, as far as the work concerning the A—— shops. As already stated, through the efforts of the Party an Independent union was built. However, the Independent did not grow. It is true that the workers in this important basic industry, in these particular shops are extremely disgusted with the A. F. of L. bureaucracy. To continue, however, to agitate for an Independent union at this time would be wrong. In the recent months definite sections of this industry in other parts of the country joined the A. F. of L. Because of certain peculiarities of this industry which require organization on a national scale, to continue the building of the Independent Union in this shop at this time would mean to separate and isolate the workers in A—— shops from the rest of the workers in the industry.

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Another task in the A—— shops is to build strong rank-and-file groups in the Brotherhood. Here we must state that lately we have succeeded in making our comrades conscious of the importance of the work in the Brotherhood and considering the fact that for our comrades, or non-Party workers, to join the Brotherhood real sacrifices must be made as far as the initiation and dues payments are concerned, and considering that not only do our comrades join, but urge non-Party members to do likewise, we are sure that our work in the Brotherhood will even be better in the future than it was in the past or is at present.

In S—— our task at the present time is, first of all, to agitate among the workers to join the A. F. of L. and simultaneously to build a strong rank and file group. We must not for a moment lose sight of the fact that a good many of the S—— workers are in the company union. We must do away with the conception of boycotting the company union, if such a conception exists. We must not forget that not all S—— workers who are in the company union realize the real purpose of the company in building this "union". Our task is, as in the case of Z—— shop, for rank and file workers to be elected from the departments to the Executive Committee of the company union, and through these rank and file representatives, expose the company union and develop struggles for better conditions for the S—— workers. We have sold Party literature there; we have held very successful gate meetings; we have built a Party unit, but we have not sufficiently emphasized the building of rank and file groups. The same weakness is true in M—— shoe factory.

The next question, "How are the campaigns of the Party brought into the shops?" First, let me say this. There is not a leaflet on a section, district or national scale, no matter what it may deal with, that does not, once it reaches our headquarters, get into the factories of Long Island.

During the election campaign, we printed 20,000 calls for the Election Campaign Conference for exclusive distribution in the factories. We have distributed leaflets in the factories on "Why the Workers Should Vote Communist". Factory gate meetings during the campaign were almost daily occurrences in our Section. In the A—— shops, alone, we sold some 600 platforms of the Communist Party. Yes, comrades, sold, not distributed. This is something to be proud of. Three hundred platforms were sold to the workers of M—— shop. Think for a moment, these 300 workers of M—— who bought our platforms, and who are in the A. F. of L. Think, comrades, of the possibility and the basis for our work in the A. F. of L. Yet there is a weak rank-and-file group there. On the whole, you can see that the campaigns of the Party were brought into the shops not only by our shop units, but also by those

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units which concentrate on shops. I cannot think of one important political campaign of our Party which was not brought into the factories in the form of literature, leaflets, meetings, to the points of concentration in our Section.

In the second Three-Month Plan adopted by our Section, we call for the building of new shop nuclei in a number of important basic industries in our Section. This, comrades, is not merely a plan on paper. We have carried out our first Three-Month Plan over 80 per cent as far as shop concentration was concerned. I feel confident that our second Three-Month Plan will be carried out as well, and will exceed the 80 per cent mark. Already the comrades in the units are concentrating on the M—— textile mill, and other important shops. The units carry on concentration through the *Daily Worker*, making contacts with workers, issuing leaflets, etc., and I am sure that at the end of the Three-Month-Plan, we shall have shop nuclei in the shops I have enumerated.

How and to what extent did our Section participate in strike struggles? In G——, as I have already stated, the Party played a definite role. The mass organizations, particularly the I.L.D., were also involved in the strike. Not only was the Party mobilized for picketing, etc., but the Party was looked upon as a leader by the G—— workers. During the strike, the Section Organizer spoke at a strikers' meeting, on the role of the Party in economic struggles, and received very good response from the strikers.

During the recent textile strike the Party took an active part—particularly in front of the M—— mill, where we tried to bring down the workers on strike. We also participated in the strike in the G. B.——, but not to any appreciable extent, though we did a little good work. That work was done primarily by Unit 1. The Section as a whole, however, did not play any role during the strike at G. B.—— In L.M.—— we have tried to get into the picture. We tried again. We did not succeed and we never came back again. We failed to follow up constantly our work among the L.M.—— strikers and we allowed ourselves to be terrorized by the A. F. of L. organizer. We have justified our action by the excuse of pressure of other work, and this is exactly what the Open Letter warned us against, and that is, not to be swayed by daily events and overlook important struggles that are taking place within the Section. We must remember that wherever a struggle takes place, our Party must be there.

A few words on unemployment. Here, too, for a long time, we neglected the work. Here, too, we tried to justify this neglect by the shop work we carried on. Concentration on factories, comrades, does not eliminate the importance of the Party's participating and leading in the struggle for immediate relief and unemployment

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and social insurance. We can become a factor among the unemployed only when we prove in deeds that we can fight with them and lead them in the struggle for relief. Lately, however, we made a definite turn in this field of work. We have assigned forces for this work. We have worked out a plan of work. The Section as a whole is more conscious and pays more attention to this important field of work. Already in Astoria we built up a strong Unemployment Council.

The beginnings of an Unemployment Council in Corona Heights are being realized. We do not limit ourselves to the building of Unemployment Councils but are definitely leading the struggle for the immediate needs of the workers. The Unemployment Councils go regularly to the Relief Bureaus and win the demands for needy workers. It is significant that the first time our comrades went to the Relief Bureaus with the unemployed workers, the supervisor stated, "Oh, my God, I did not know there was an Unemployment Council in Long Island". She knows it now, yes, and knows it so darn well that when the committees from the Unemployment Councils appear, she makes sure that they do not wait too long, for fear that the unemployed present might join the Unemployment Council.

The broad united front activities in Queens on behalf of the Negro doctors, once more refute the argument of those who claim that Communists are insincere as a "justification" for their hindering the unity of the workers.

The united front activities with the Committee for Equal Opportunities are particularly important because of the issue involved. These activities indicate the strides forward our Party made in this field, by doing away with the old methods of introducing into the United Front every current campaign of the Party instead of concentrating on one main issue.

The Committee for Equal Opportunities was formed as a result of the policy of the administration to discriminate against Negro doctors in the Queens County General Hospital, which is to open in 1935. We have at present in the United Front some 85 organizations representing over 60,000 workers. Many of these organizations have never before participated in any struggles at all. Such organizations as N.A.A.C.P., Negro Republican Clubs, Democratic and Fusion Clubs, various churches, etc. There are also some S.P. branches participating in this united action. The revolutionary organizations are in a minority, but our program of action, our proposals and resolutions are accepted and carried out with enthusiasm by the representatives of these organizations.

Since the formation of this united front, a number of actions were undertaken, as a result of which, already certain concessions have been won. The Commissioner of Hospitals, Dr. Goldwater,

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was forced to make a public statement to the press repudiating the previous list of doctors as announced by the previous administration, and further stated that the appointment for the Queens County General Hospital staff will be considered on merits only. This, of course, is only a maneuver on his part to quiet down the mass indignation aroused through the united front activities.

In the course of these united front activities, certain things became evident. First, as a result of our day to day work in the united front, the representatives in the Negro organizations convinced themselves of our sincerity and determination in the struggle for the rights of the Negro masses and more and more look up to us for leadership. Second, with the spreading of the united front movement the leaders of the reformist organizations became very restless and nervous and did all they could break up this united front. Thus, for instance, one of the leaders of the N.A.A.C.P. local sent a letter to the Committee withdrawing from the united front. In reply the Committee elected a delegation which visited the general meeting of the N.A.A.C.P., and after a speech by a representative of the Committee, the membership meeting unanimously decided to continue in the united front.

Third, the partial victories of the Committee for Equal Opportunities not only convinced the organizations involved of the importance of unified struggle, but also had its repercussions in other parts of the city.

On the other hand, certain weaknesses were also to be noted: (1) Insufficient drawing in of the membership in the various actions initiated by the Committee. (2) In spite of its broad representation, insufficient white organizations, particularly A. F. of L. locals, were involved in the struggle for Negro rights. (3) Insufficient support to struggles of this Committee from other parts of the city (with some exceptions). (4) Insufficient independent activity of the Communist Party.

In this connection it should be stated that the L.S.N.R. has completely overlooked this important struggle. It participated in the united front as just another organization with no independent activity whatsoever. The lack of initiative of the L.S.N.R. reflects the serious weaknesses of our work among the Negro masses in our Section. We left the work among the Negro masses almost entirely to our Negro comrades. We thought we understood the resolution of the Communist International on the Negro question which states that it is particularly the job of the white comrades to be in the forefront in the struggle for Negro rights. I say, we thought we understood, advisedly. We cannot separate principle from practice.

If we are to be judged by our failure to build the L.S.N.R., then we must admit that it is more basic than a mere failure to carry

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out a Party resolution. When we consider that our class on Negro problems in the Queens Workers School is the smallest class, and that at times it is necessary for the Section Committee to do assigning for that class, then we must acknowledge that our approach to the whole problem was an incorrect one and must be corrected at once.

To improve this situation we must immediately examine the work of the L.S.N.R., assign more white comrades to carry on the work, and in addition to independent L.S.N.R. action in the United Front Committee to develop independent struggles around issues of discrimination, as the only condition to establish itself as the leader and fighter for the rights of the Negro masses.

A word on the American League Against War and Fascism. A few months ago, we had no League at all in the Section. At the present time we have two very well-functioning and very active branches of the American League. They are doing pretty good work and involve more and more non-Party people in this highly important work. The weakness of these two branches lies in their composition. We have not succeeded in involving the workers from the factories in this struggle against war and fascism. The composition of the two branches in the American League is mostly from the middle class. The middle class is important as an ally in the struggles of the workers, but if we take the struggle against war and fascism seriously, if we want to become and be a factor when war is declared, then, comrades, we must penetrate with our message of struggle against war and fascism the hundreds of factories in our Section, organize anti-war committees in the factories among the decisive sections of the American workers as a prerequisite for successful struggle against those responsible for war.

One of the encouraging features of the Y.C.L. in our Section at present is the considerable improvement in its social composition. There is better activity in the Y.C.L. at present and its work is more conscious and planned than it was in the past. The relations between the Party and Y.C.L. in our Section improved. This improvement, however, is limited to the top committee. In the lower ranks of the Party we still have a keen underestimation of the importance of the Y.C.L., which at times results in insufficient assistance to the Y.C.L. units in various parts of our Section. The decision of the District to assign Party comrades for Youth work must be carried out at once. We must take definite steps to help the Y.C.L. build itself in the factories, further improve its composition, and give the Y.C.L. comrades leadership not only in the sense of giving orders, as the tendencies prevailed in the past, but actually helping them politically, organizationally and financially, and consider the building of the Y.C.L. as one of the major tasks and responsibilities of the Party.

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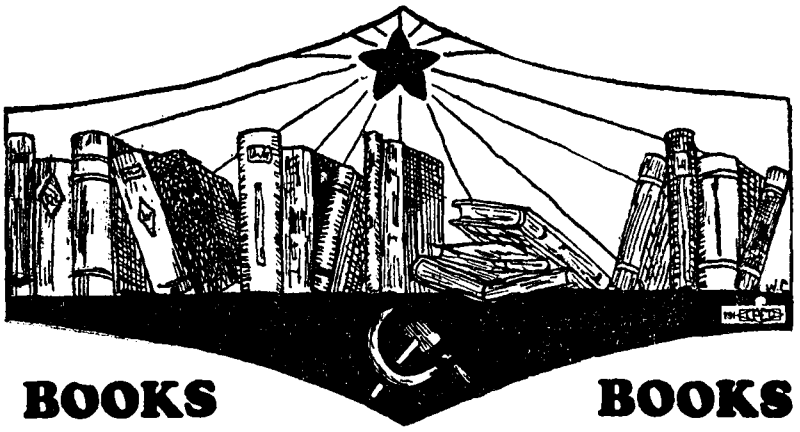

WOLL'S NEW ADVENTURE IN REACTIONARY DEMAGOGY

Labor, Industry and Government—By Matthew Woll—D. Appleton-Century Company—$2.00

By WILLIAM F. DUNNE

MATTHEW WOLL, Acting President of the National Civic Federation and a Vice-President of the American Federation of Labor, has written a book—*Labor, Industry and Government.* It must be rated high in the list of new adventures in reactionary hypocricy by the reformist American labor leaders of the official hierarchy inspired by the thought that under the New Deal, as during the World War, they were to be the honored and trusted equals of the great in the government.

Woll poses in this book, as he does in his various articles, speeches, etc., as a staunch champion of democracy. He is all for freedom, liberty, justice and other bourgeois abstractions. But to anyone with even a casual knowledge of the innumerable anti-democratic acts against the union membership on the part of the official A. F. of L. leadership in general, and of Woll in particular, it is clear that lip devotion to these things in the abstract has nothing whatever to do with the working out of a program and system of tactics that would ensure them to the membership of organized labor. Woll himself proves this in his latest effort:

Take the following instance:

Woll inveighs against General Johnson's speech at the Washington convention of the A. F. of L., October, 1933. He takes issue with Johnson on the right to strike. Johnson (whom he quotes) said, among other things:

> "The plain stark truth is that you cannot tolerate strikes. . . . If now—when the whole power of this government and its people are being given in an effort to provide and maintain to the ultimate the rights of every man who works for pay—you permit or counte-

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nance this economic evil, that public confidence and opinion will turn against you. . . ." (p. 120)

Woll then remarks: "How far a cry is this plea from the appeal of Lincoln, the great Champion of Freedom, who could utter 'Thank God we have a country where working men have the right to strike'." (pp. 120-1).

It is only necessary to say here that Vice-President Woll was one of those in charge of the convention (chairman of the resolutions committee) who led the applause and cheering with which almost the entire convention signified its agreement with the general's speech. It is extremely doubtful if there has ever been a more disgusting exhibition of servility to the spokesman of the government of monopoly capital on the part of "labor leaders".

Woll is perhaps at his best on this question of "the right to strike". With truly jesuitical sophistry he tries to put the question in the form of "the existence of a human right" and "its wise utilization". Specifically he says:

> "The existence of a human right and its wise utilization are different problems; they represent differing degrees of responsibility in its exercise. This is especially true with the right to strike. *It is not uncommon for the members of a newly organized union to want to strike upon the first provocation.* It becomes the duty of every responsible trade-union official to instruct new members that the right to strike is an instrument that is used as a last resort and not as a first apeal; that it is a *privilege* to be employed only when the processes of reasoning and collective negotiations have been exhausted." (P. 115, my emphasis.)

In other words, the sound instinct of workers to organize and go into battle against conditions that have become intolerable must be thwarted at all costs—until they have become confused, hesitant and doubtful—and have wasted precious weeks and months in futile "negotiations" while the employers organize their forces and strengthen them at all points. Automobile, steel, rubber, electric machinery manufacture, etc., in the last year and a half have shown the disastrous consequences for workers who were deluded by just this kind of sophistry.

But Woll is not yet finished with putting restrictions on the right to strike. Speaking of sympathetic strikes he invokes the old "sanctity of contract" theory:

> ". . . the use of the sympathetic strike in the United States has been limited and for a purely American reason. Most American unions have written contracts with their employers and generally these run for a specified term. . . . Breach of contract by a union is so infrequent as to make the occurrence a distinct novelty when it happens. All of the weight and influence of the American Federation of Labor is thrown against a breach of contract. Most national and international unions *will at once suspend the charter of a local union which breaches a contract and will at once bring in other members to replace those who engaged in a strike through breach of contract.*" (P. 118. My emphasis).

This lifting of charters, union scabbing, expulsions, the use of gangsters to enforce contracts upon union members whose officials had negotiated them over their heads, etc., in fact the whole theory and practice of the "sanctity of the contract" has been one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of the

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bureaucracy—and one of their main links with the employers and their organizations. Woll speaks with unction of this weapon of reaction which did much to hold the American labor movement back for years and which enabled union officials of the type of Woll to prevent united and decisive action by American workers.

But it is when Woll speaks of the general strike that one sees most plainly the face of the Acting President of the National Civic Federation through the mask of the Vice-President of the A. F. of L. He says:

> "The general strike as a political instrument in the United States *is both impractical and impossible.* In the final analysis a general strike for political purposes is a strike against the State and the State, as such, has the right to protect itself against all forms of attack, *including attack by strike. We probably must concede the right of the State to interpose restraint against a strike called against a private employment relationship where the ultimate object is political. . . .*" (p. 115.)

In this way does this supporter of the capitalist order effectively, from his standpoint, make "the right to strike" a meaningless abstraction, a mere phrase, as far as the organized labor movement and the working class as a whole is concerned. To illustrate his point he states categorically that the general textile strike could not have been continued in the face of the request of the President that it be discontinued. But the facts give him the lie. *It was not the striking workers who quit but the top leaders.*

Woll follows this same method of talking all around and about plain and indisputable facts of labor's experiences since the enactment of N.I.R.A. He follows the same method with the question of company unions, of unemployment insurance, independent political action by organized labor through a party separate and distinct from the parties of capitalism, etc. But it is evident that the events since the Washington convention—the unprecedented strike wave, its militancy and the number of workers involved, the basic character of their demands, the rising political level of these mass movements, the refusal of the capitalists in the basic industries to deal with A. F. of L. officials except in the most dire emergencies, the growing skepticism as to both the honesty and capability of the official leadership among great numbers of the union membership—all have simply made Woll a little more cautious in what he says and how he says it. Especially is he made more cautious by the great and growing disillusionment of American workers with the New Deal.

This holds true on practically every question except that of Communism and the Soviet Union. Here he really lets himself go and repeats all the stock phrases of the counter-revolution. He blames the Communists for the rise of fascism but does not mention that Catholic fascism arose in Austria where, for reasons we do not need to go into here, the Communist Party was perhaps the weakest, at least organizationally, in all Europe.

He makes no distinction between the workers' and peasants' government in the Soviet Union and the governments of monopoly capital in Germany, Italy—except that his hostility to and hatred of the Soviet Government and all it stands for are expressed with unrestrained venom.

What is Woll's real policy? It is actually fascism on a plan he considers suitable for "special American conditions". He speaks for a dictatorship of monopoly capital and its closest supporters—including himself—but, of course, he speaks in the name of "democracy". "It is," says Woll, "more and more the belief of thinking men and women that we shall have to make

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democracy work in our economic life as in our political life." What does he propose?

Nothing more or less than the re-establishment of the war-time machinery set up under the Wilson administration! He states:

"If industry . . . is unwilling to embrace labor as a partner and if management is determined upon sole dictation, then, indeed, will labor have no alternative other than to turn to the government for the control and regulation of industry. . . . Perhaps *the most ready and most immediately available instrument at command in that direction would be the Council of National Defense, created in* 1916 *before we entered the Great War, and which functioned so well in bringing about coordination between labor, industry and government during the war. It should be remembered that the Council of National Defense Act is unrepealed. It is available at any moment to the chief executive of the nation.*" (p. 230.)

I submit that this is the most brazen proposal made during the crisis by any of the housebroke band of labor leaders kept by American imperialism. (Woll was Chairman of Labor for the Council of National Defense during the war. It is evident that the ancient grandeur would not be unwelcome to him.)

Great-hearted Matthew Woll! How full of tenderness and sympathy for all good Americans he is—and how he wants to keep the class peace. Communists preaching the class struggle must bow their heads in shame and silence in the face of such noble sentiments as the following:

> "On every hand today there is loss and suffering. If labor is largely unemployed and under-employed, *so is capital to a very large extent.* If wage-earners are suffering, *so, too, are a great many employers, driven to their wits' ends in a supreme effort to stay alive.*" (p. 231.)

With the American working class being driven every day to new low standards of living, with millions living at the hunger line and with additional millions pauperized, humiliated and degraded by the New Deal, it is not necessary to say much more about a "labor" leader who can even so much as waste a second on the "misery" of "a great many employers".

Woll's entire book is in this tone of the joint interests of capitalists and labor. I believe that he does not even once refer to employers as capitalists in its 341 pages. This would be too much of a concession to the class struggle. He does not go beyond the "fair day's wage for a fair day's work" theory of "pure and simple" trade unionism. "American labor", says Woll, "has been simply and insistently American in its demands for a *fair share* of the products of labor. Of course, thta is radical anywhere. At the same time American labor was been conservative in the insistence with which it has *stood guard over* the essential foundations of American liberties and American institutions." (My emphasis.)

Just what "essential foundations of American liberties" are you standing guard over now, Mr. Woll, in your capacity as Acting President of the labor-hating and labor-baiting National Civic Federation? Your friend and associate Ralph Easley, secretary of the N.C.F., has just recently, in the articles of John L. Spivak, been exposed as actively working to get the boycott against Nazi-Germany called off—the boycott which the American Federation of Labor endorsed and which it supports. Woll is a responsible officer of the A. F. of L. As long as such facts are known it doesn't make a great deal of difference what Woll's verbal and written odes to "democracy" may say.

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